

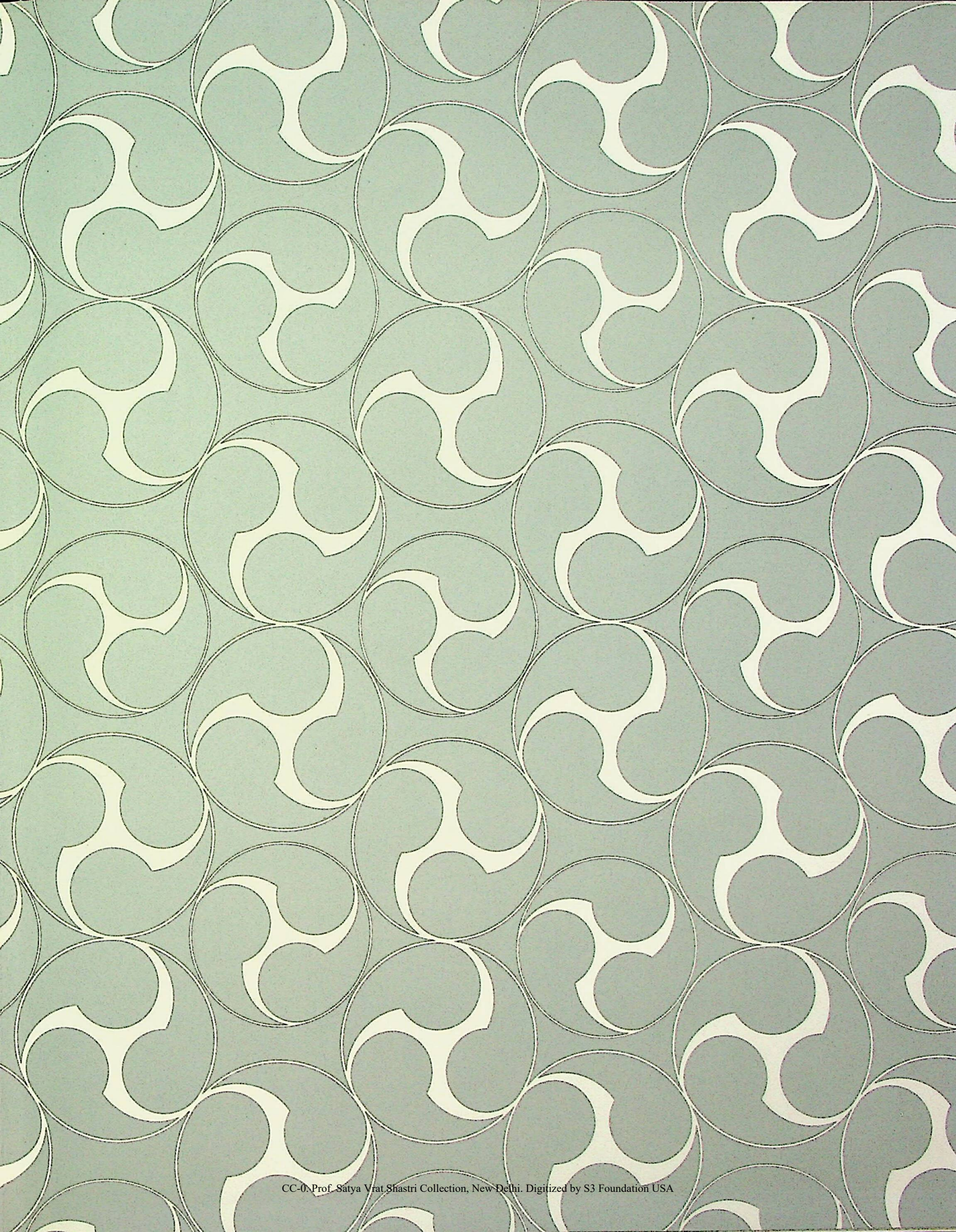


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The Hamlyn History  
of the World in Colour  
Volume Thirteen

# STRUGGLE FOR SUPREMACY







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# STRUGGLE FOR SUPREMACY

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# Introduction By FRANK THISTLETHWAITE

In the structure of any historical series the boundary lines between volumes are never easy to draw. In the case of this volume the end presented little difficulty. The French Revolution was so cataclysmic an event, or series of events, as to transform Europe in profound ways which are beyond controversy. The map of Europe, politically, governmentally, socially and ideologically, would never be the same again. It is true that the reader will find in this volume much that will lead him to anticipate and reflect on these portentous events to come: in the shift in temper from reason to sentiment and towards romanticism, for example, or in the growth of the power and organisation of what was to become the modern national state. But the outbreak of revolution in France is as satisfactory a close to an historical volume as one could wish for.

When the eighteenth century begins is however a nice historical problem. From the late seventeenth century onwards new forces were making their impact on Europe which had the effect of adding a new dimension to European history. The expansion of European countries overseas, in trade and colonisation, so long previously pioneered by the Spanish, the Portuguese and the Dutch, became a force powerfully to be reckoned with in Europe when the British and the French tangled for mastery in the Indian Ocean and above all in North America and the West Indies. These issues cannot all tidily be embraced in one short volume. The overseas story in particular needs separate treatment with its own intrinsic narrative beginning in the seventeenth century and continuing throughout the eighteenth. This story is told in Volume 12, the previous volume of this series, in so far as it concerned the Anglo-French conflict, though European relations with the Far East and with South America and the explorations of the Pacific, Australia and New Zealand remain.

The topic of central and eastern Europe in the late seventeenth century is involved in this volume where it makes a fitting introduction, picking up significant threads from the immediately preceding generations. In other words, this volume and its predecessor should be regarded in fact as companion volumes. In particular, it will not be possible to obtain a proper understanding of Europe without recourse to the previous volume in relation to two vital and related develop-

ments: on the one hand, the growth of oceanic commerce from and to Holland, France and above all Britain with a resultant wealth, maritime power and, in the case of Britain, incipient industrialism; and on the other, the effects of the ensuing maritime rivalry between Britain and France, in an age of mercantilist economic and governmental policy, upon the international relationships of power in continental Europe.

Although the final, overseas chapter is a reminder of the wider world and provides an essential flavour of the European mind in this period—for example, as it speculated upon the scientific problems and prospects of Pacific exploration and as it absorbed the styles and tastes of the exotic civilisations of China and Japan—the unity of the present volume rests on the fact that it is concerned essentially with continental Europe. This is historically and artistically satisfying because, as the plates as well as the text make abundantly clear, the civilisation of the eighteenth century, despite the outstanding impact of English habits of thinking in scientific inquiry and philosophy on the 'Age of Reason', was continental in character. And apart from the rich contribution of the Austrian and German courts to music and the stage, the culture of the Enlightenment, taken as a whole, was French and its metropolitan centre was Paris. It was French fashions in most aspects of taste and thought and of governmental and diplomatic habit which permeated the more provincial centres of Europe from Madrid to St Petersburg, from Naples to Copenhagen, and especially, as Mr Harris points out, in the more backward parts of Europe where standards and practices were set, not by a mercantile middle class but by 'enlightened despots' in touch with France and each other.

The civilisation of the eighteenth century was, indeed, continental in another sense. It was continent-wide. One must always guard against the tendency of an historical perspective to see uniformities and to shade out disparities and in our case to accept the polite and the articulate and to discount the disparate, the turbulent, the primitive, indeed the barbaric, aspects of life in the rural society which Europe essentially remained. Nonetheless, Europe in the eighteenth century was more culturally homogeneous than she had been since the Middle Ages and was to be again until the present when the



potentiality of another such unity is so much in our minds. 'The concert of Europe' is a post-Napoleonic term which previous generations had not found it necessary to invent because its reality was assumed. The relations between states continued to be governed largely by dynastic assumptions and the room to manoeuvre by limited objectives in which, as the author points out, an element of whim or fantasy was only partially displaced by Frederick the Great's intrusion of an element of *Realpolitik*. The limited objectives of diplomacy extended to wars fought by small armies of mercenaries and pressed troops drilled to formal manoeuvre in campaigns limited by the seasons and a primitive organisation of supply. The concepts neither of national mobilisation nor of ideological crusade had yet been born. These objectives were limited by a social and political order which held so stable that trade between enemies could thrive and the gentry could travel through enemy country without any threat of molestation; social communication among equals was unimpaired by war. This is not to deny that there were major shifts in the balance of forces such as the revolution in alliances of 1756 or that resulting from the inefficient but powerful new impact of Russia combined with the slackening hold of Turkey in eastern Europe. The latter, however, took place at the periphery of a Europe whose boundaries were extended to include a partially Europeanised Russia as part of the European system.

That system held not so much because of a common aristocratic and semi-feudal social order but because the personal rule of princes acquired new force from the rationalising of administration: the eroding of medieval estates and privileges (including practices of self-government which were thought to be anachronistic) and the substitution of military, civil and judicial services responsible to the ruler. By such means the 'enlightened' despots of principalities created for themselves both the fact and the notion of 'states'. Kosciuzko's Poland apart, however, this notion did not extend to that of the 'nation' and the threat of a revolution which was both French and ideological forced the despots of the Enlightenment into a reactionary defensiveness which, until national self-consciousness, was no match for the French revolutionary elan. Against this new force, the civility of the Enlightenment, so urbane and, in a measure,

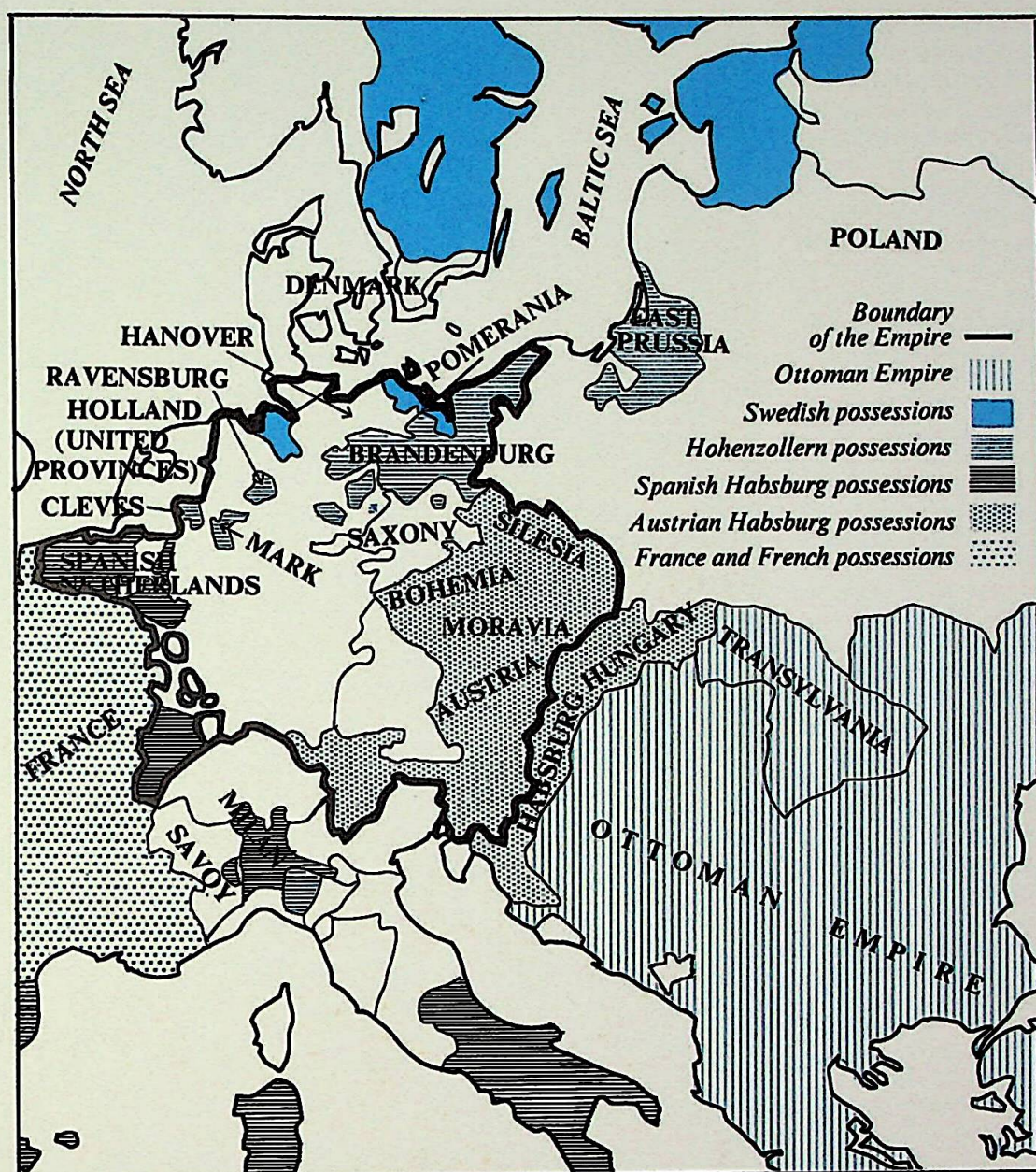
so well-intentioned, collapsed; and the civilisation of the eighteenth century, as proud and seemingly as established as that of the Roman Empire which was so much admired, was shown to be shallow and inadequate in its thinking, its practices and its capacity for change. The text and the plates of this volume together illumine the beguiling magic of this lost age of the Ancien Regime; and while we cannot forget the dying bird we cannot but admire the style of its plumage.



# EMERGENCE OF THE GREAT POWERS OF CENTRAL-EASTERN EUROPE

	Brandenburg-Prussia	Austria	Russia
1640	Frederick William elector (1640) Peace of Westphalia ends Thirty Years War (1648)		War with Poland (1654–67)
1660	Peace of Oliva (1660) Battle of Fehrbellin (1675)	Battle of St Gotthard (1664)	Razin's revolt (1670–1)
1680		Relief of Vienna (1683) Reconquest of Hungary (1684–99) War of the League of Augsburg (1688–97) Frederick III elector (1688)	Peter I the Great (1689–1725) Capture of Azov (1696) Peter in Europe (1697–98)
1700	War of the Spanish Succession (1701–13) Frederick I of Prussia (1701) Frederick William I (1713–40)	Charles VI (1711–40) Pragmatic Sanction (1713) War with Turkey (1716–18)	Great Northern War (1700–21) Battle of Poltava (1709) Loss of Azov (1711)
1720		Alliance with Spain (1725) Treaty of Vienna (1731) War of the Polish Succession (1733–5) War with the Turks (1736–9)	
1740	Frederick I (the Great) (1740–86) First and Second Silesian Wars (1740–5) Convention of Westminster (1756) The Seven Years War (1756–63)	Maria Theresa (1740–80) War of the Austrian Succession (1740–8) Alliance with France (1756) The Seven Years War (1756–63)	Elizabeth (1741–61) War with Sweden (1741–3) Austro-Russian alliance (1746)
1769	Alliance with Russia (1764) First partition of Poland (1772) Austro-Prussian War (1778–9)		Catherine II the Great (1762–96) War with Turkey (1768–74) First partition of Poland (1772) Pugachev revolt (1773–4)
1780	League of German Princes (1785) Frederick William II (1786–97) Second partition of Poland (1793) Third partition of Poland (1795)	Joseph II (1780–90) War with Turks (1788–91) Leopold II (1790–2) Prussia and Austria at war with revolutionary France (1792)	Austro-Russian alliance (1781) Crimea annexed (1783) Charter of Nobles (1785) War with Turks (1787–92) Second partition of Poland (1793) Third partition of Poland (1795)





# Central and eastern Europe in the late seventeenth century

*Terrible aftermath of the Thirty Years War; Habsburg and Hohenzollern domination of Germany; political and economic weakness in Poland; Sobieski and the crusade against the Turks.*

## The Holy Roman Empire

Until the nineteenth century, an area considerably larger than the two present-day German republics was occupied by the Holy Roman Empire—not an empire in the modern sense, or even a state, but a patchwork of 350-odd territorial units owing

*By the Peace of Westphalia (1648), which ended the Thirty Years War, Sweden obtained western Pomerania with the vital harbours of Stettin, but as partial compensation Frederick William gained several bishoprics adjacent to the widely scattered Hohenzollern lands. France emerged from the war as the dominant European power*

*and because of the territories ceded to her and to Sweden the authority of the Habsburgs and of the Holy Roman Empire was lessened. Austria was to be menaced further by the Turks, while the Swiss Confederation and the independence of the Netherlands were formally recognised in 1648.*



allegiance to a Holy Roman emperor. The majority of the inhabitants were Germans, but the empire also contained the Czechs of Bohemia, the Flemings of the Spanish Netherlands (modern Belgium), and other non-Germans.

The empire was religiously as well as politically fragmented; and the hatreds of Catholic, Lutheran and Calvinist were the occasion of the terrible Thirty Years' War (1618–48), in which most of the European powers became involved. Germany was the main theatre of the war, and at its close was physically and morally devastated. Although not all areas were equally affected, suffering and impoverishment were very widely distributed. Law and order vanished; trade was disrupted, and often re-routed to avoid Germany altogether; and the population of both town and country fell catastrophically. In many areas the material and human losses were not made good until the early decades of the eighteenth century.

The political results were equally serious. For a time during the war it seemed that the emperor Ferdinand II might be able to weld the empire into a unified state comparable to France or Spain. His failure entailed the creation of new weaknesses and—of much greater importance—the perpetuation of all the existing weaknesses. In an age when powerful and unified nation-states were coming to dominate Europe, and when the authority of governments was being asserted with increasing success by ever larger bureaucracies, the empire remained as it

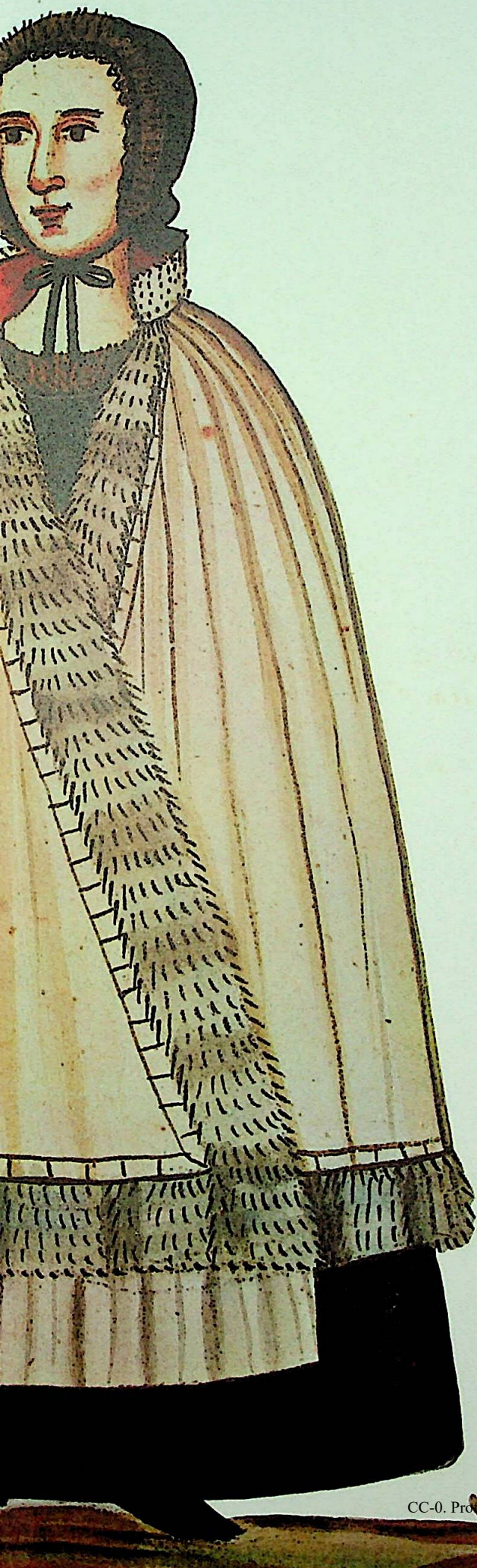
*The Hohenzollerns produced a number of outstanding figures even before the Great Elector. One such was the able and ruthless Margrave Casimir (1481–1527), an early champion of the Reformation.*

*The painting, by Hans Süß von Kulmbach, shows Casimir in his thirtieth year. (Alte Pinakothek, Munich.)*

*Right: a woman of the German bourgeoisie. Late sixteenth-century engraving. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)*







was: a quasi-feudal agglomeration of more or less independent units.

The lay and ecclesiastical princes, free cities and imperial knights whose territories made up the empire owed formal allegiance to the emperor, but the more powerful were entirely beyond his control. Imperial authority was backed by neither an army nor the ability to levy taxes. The deliberative assembly, the Diet, was a wrangling, ineffective body; the judicial institutions of the empire were antiquated and notoriously slow. The exercise of imperial power was restricted to arbitrating in disputes between German rulers, and occasionally between rulers and their subjects; and even this applied only to small or weak states.

The emperor did not inherit his office: he was elected by the most important princes of the empire. In the late seventeenth century the electors were the ecclesiastical rulers of Mainz, Trier and Cologne, and the lay princes of the Palatinate, Saxony, Brandenburg, Bavaria, Bohemia and Hanover. Every candidate for the throne had to buy the electors' support with cash or concessions, so that any continuous growth of imperial authority was impossible to achieve in normal circumstances. In fact, the Habsburg family succeeded in monopolising the imperial office: with one exception (1742–5), every emperor from 1438 until the dissolution of the empire in 1806 was a Habsburg. This provided the empire with its only element of effective continuity; and it was the resources of the Habsburgs' large hereditary possessions that sustained such authority as the emperor possessed.

### The empire at war

For practical purposes, then, the largest German principalities were independent states, able to make alliances with each other or with non-German powers, jealous of their neighbours, and hostile to the extension of imperial authority. A certain vestigial imperial or German sentiment could persuade the princes to rally to the emperor, notably in campaigns against the Turks; but it was always of brief duration. From 1681 there was even an imperial army of sorts, though it was mainly provided by the western states of the empire, which felt threatened by the aggressions of Louis XIV.

Indeed, the diplomatic history of these German states in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century was largely one of reaction to French initiatives. Louis' insatiable ambition and over-confidence gradually united the empire against him. The powerful league of Rhine princes, formed in 1654 as a satellite of France, was dissolved in 1668. French success in the War of Devolution (1667–8), the Dutch War (1672–9) and the legalistic aggressions by which Louis 'reunited' border territories

with France, made it progressively more difficult for the French to buy off German states or play upon their mutual suspicions: France, not the emperor, came to be seen as the main threat to their security. In 1686 the princes of Franconia and the Rhineland formed a defensive alliance, the League of Augsburg, directed against France; and within two years Brandenburg, Bavaria and Saxony had joined the league. From the beginning of the War of the League of Augsburg (1688), most of the empire took part in the long struggles against France that ended only in 1713.

### The princes

This unity was as factitious and devoid of significance for the future as the larger unity of the European states against France. The less dramatic but more durable tendencies of the age reinforced the independence and power of the individual princes. The right of subjects to appeal to the emperor over the heads of their rulers was progressively curtailed. Several princes succeeded in weakening the representative estates in their dominions, or even in doing without them altogether, aping the absolutism of Louis XIV. Every petty ruler sought to emulate at least the trappings of the Sun King's greatness, building a miniature Versailles, making French the language of his court, creating a bureaucracy and maintaining a standing army.

The extra-imperial interests of the princes were emphasised by the dynastic ambitions that led them to seek thrones outside Germany, as when Augustus the Strong of Saxony became king of Poland (1697) and the Elector of Hanover became George I of England (1714). In the long run this kind of entanglement led to the neglect or over-exploitation of the German state concerned; and it was partly because Saxony and Hanover became involved in Polish and British affairs that, as we shall see, Brandenburg-Prussia was able to become the leading German state.

### Germany stagnates

German commerce had begun to decline in some places before the Thirty Years War, and the war itself wrecked the German economy and left foreign powers in control of the mouths of the great German rivers. All the same, a highly centralised state like France, with large resources at its disposal, might have recovered fairly quickly; the hundreds of units making up the empire could not.

Division bred many weaknesses. The exactions of the princes were disproportionate to the resources of their states, which had to pay for the upkeep of a local court, a local bureaucracy, a local army. The burden was unevenly spread, since noble





*Frederick William, 'the Great Elector', laid the foundations of Brandenburg-Prussia's greatness. He appears with his wife in the painting (above) by Matthias Czwiczek, surrounded by the impedimenta of royalty and war.*

*Right: a ceremonial gold helmet with a plume, worn by the Great Elector. (Charlottenburg Schloss, West Berlin.)*







privileges were usually left untouched—a tacit repayment for noble acquiescence in princely absolutism. The means by which revenue was raised, though in accordance with the economic theories of the time, were inappropriate to a complex of small, impoverished states. Taxes, monopolies and excise duties discouraged manufactures; customs duties levied at frontiers and along rivers drove away trade. Towns under princely rule were borne down by their rulers' exactions; the free cities, hemmed in on all sides by the territories of the princes, stagnated.

There were exceptions, notably Hamburg, Frankfurt and Leipzig; indeed, all generalisations about the empire—a miniature world of states and cities with varied resources and widely different socio-political structures—are subject to qualification. The situation of the peasants was even more various. In Saxony and western and southern Germany they were free and relatively prosperous. Elsewhere, and particularly in the north-east, they were still serfs, allowed to cultivate their holdings in return for various services, including work on the land which their lord farmed for his own use; and here the rigours of serfdom were if anything increased after the Thirty Years War. Depopulation encouraged landlords to enlarge their own holdings, which entailed the imposition of greater labour services on a peasantry much reduced in numbers.

### The origins of dualism

Thus all the facts of German life indicated prolonged backwardness, fragmentation and diversification. Germany was not to be united for two centuries, but the politics of central Europe were about to be transformed by the emergence of new forces. Religion gradually ceased to be a political issue; for most of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the main motif of German history was to be 'dualism', the domination of Germany by two states, the Habsburg dominions and Brandenburg-Prussia. This was foreshadowed by two developments in the late seventeenth century: the consolidation and extension of the Habsburg lands through the defeat of the Turks; and the forced growth of Brandenburg-Prussia under a succession of able Hohenzollern rulers.

### Brandenburg-Prussia

The Electorate of Brandenburg was a poor, sandy, waterlogged land in north-east Germany. It had been ruled by the Hohenzollern family since 1415; under Frederick William, 'the Great Elector', it was to become the heartland of a formidable state.

The other Hohenzollern territories were scattered and difficult to defend. Only Pomerania, immediately to the north, was defensible; the Duchy of East Prussia, for



The army of Brandenburg, virtually non-existent in 1640, was reorganised and re-equipped by the Great Elector. Its successes against the Swedes are recorded in a series of tapestries. The battle of Fehrbellin (1675), at which Frederick William's army of 6,000 overcame twice as

many Swedes (centre). The siege of Wolgast (1677) (below). The Elector's troops landing on the island of Rügen, which was captured in 1678 (below right). Below: a wheel-lock pistol and (bottom) a rifle. (Charlottenburg Schloss, West Berlin.)







which the elector did homage to the king of Poland, was separated from Brandenburg by a wide belt of Polish territory; the Duchy of Cleves and the counties of Mark and Ravensburg were in the distant Rhineland.

When Frederick William acceded in 1640, at the age of twenty, the Thirty Years War was entering its final phase, and most of his possessions were occupied by foreign troops. He extricated himself from his difficulties by a combination of skill and good luck, and with French support secured relatively good terms at the Peace of Westphalia (1648). Sweden took western Pomerania, with the vital harbour of Stettin which controlled the River Oder, but as partial compensation Frederick William received several secularised bishoprics adjacent to Hohenzollern lands. Only after Westphalia was Frederick William able to begin the task which occupied the rest of his life.

### The making of the state

The Hohenzollern lands were not a state: they were separate entities which happened to be ruled by the same man; each was represented by its own Estates, preoccupied with local problems and averse to voting money for the defence of other Hohenzollern possessions. The essential achievement of Frederick William's reign was to make this dynastic complex into a unified state, the total resources of which were at the elector's disposal.

The Brandenburg Estates were dominated by the Junkers, nobles who farmed their lands for profit with serf labour, mainly producing corn and beer for sale. They were a working nobility, by no means very wealthy, and they had none of the thirst for adventure and glory characteristic of great aristocracies. In 1650 they refused the elector money with which to fight the Swedes in Pomerania: Pomerania was no concern of theirs. In 1652, when Frederick William demanded a general excise that would have ended the Junkers' virtual exemption from taxation, he had to be content with a compromise. The Junkers' control over their serfs was strengthened: the elector was to consult the Estates on all matters of importance; and in return he was to have a grant of 500,000 thalers.

In the event, what mattered was the money. With money Frederick William could raise troops; and with troops he could impose his will on his recalcitrant subjects. The war between Sweden and Poland (1655–60) gave him the opportunity and excuse to execute this policy. In the war itself he judiciously changed sides at the right moment, thereby securing the complete independence of his Duchy of East Prussia; but the internal repercussions were even more important.

Everywhere the elector's soldiers recruited and collected the taxes he imposed; resistance was simply met by force. In Branden-





burg alone, which had granted 500,000 thalers over six years in 1652, 110,000 thalers a month was being collected by 1659. The excise, which was gradually made compulsory for all the towns, became a permanent tax; and without the power of the purse the Estates became insignificant. The Junkers, secure in their control over the serfs and exempt from payment of the excise, quickly accepted the situation.

Elsewhere the pattern of events was similar. East Prussia, with a relatively wealthy nobility habituated to the anarchy of Poland, put up a stiffer resistance than Brandenburg. Only in the sixteen-seventies was all opposition destroyed; the independence of the four locally elected governors was ended, and the duchy was integrated into the Hohenzollern state. The Rhineland territories preserved some measure of independence, though they lost the exceptional

liberties they had won earlier in the Great Elector's reign. They were simply too far away for the Hohenzollerns to control them autocratically.

### The role of the army

It is difficult to assess how consciously Frederick William planned the development of the Hohenzollern state; but his rule undoubtedly possessed an inner logic, conscious or not. Given the scattered nature of the Hohenzollern territories, security could be gained only by strengthening the army. A bigger army had to be supported out of heavier taxes, which could be collected only by the army. Army and administration thus became closely identified. The General War Commissariat, created to organise supplies for the army during the Swedish-Polish war, took over the collec-



*Frederick William succeeded in expelling the Swedes from German soil, but was forced by French pressure to return all his conquests.*

*Right: the siege of Stralsund, which was captured from the Swedes in 1679. Tapestry. Centre: wheel-lock horse-pistol inlaid with ivory; the ball at the end made it possible to use the pistol as a club.*

*Far right: Frederick, the first Hohenzollern king, holding the royal sceptre. (Charlottenburg Schloss, West Berlin.)*





tion of taxes, and its officers became the most important executives of a centralised and militarised bureaucracy.

The army, which had numbered less than 5,000 at the end of the Thirty Years War, was 12,000 strong even after reductions made in 1660; and at Frederick William's death in 1688 a small population (about a million) was supporting a standing army of 30,000. The nobility increasingly valued state service as a means of advancement, developing an unshakable esprit de corps and unswerving devotion to the dynasty. Even under the Great Elector, army and state, officer and official were becoming synonymous.

### Hohenzollern economics

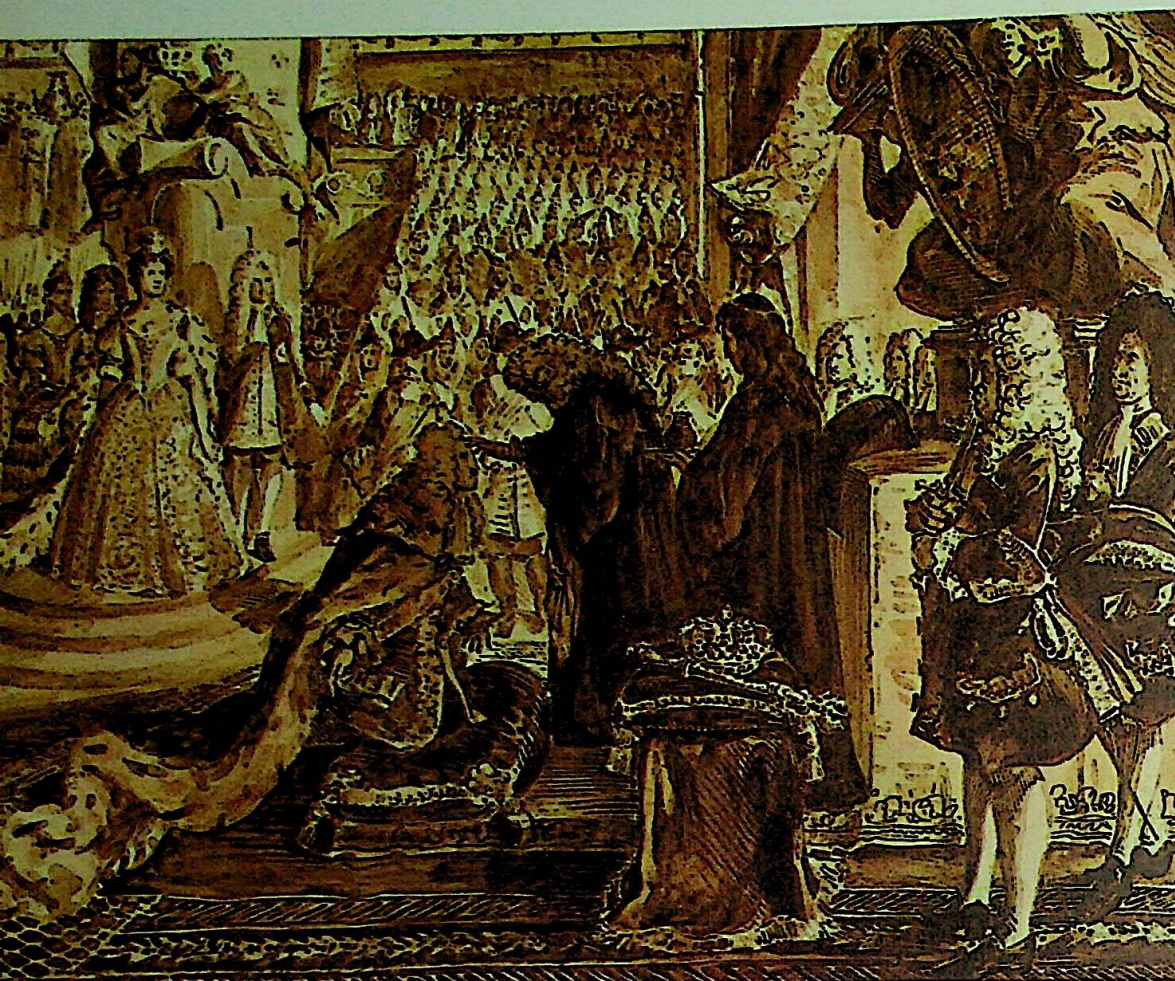
The Great Elector had every interest in making his state prosperous, since pros-

perity entailed a larger tax yield. He encouraged immigration, granting favourable terms to Dutch farmers and Huguenot refugees from Louis XIV's persecution. He improved communications, building a canal that enabled barges to sail from the Oder to the Elbe via Berlin (thus avoiding the Baltic ports controlled by Sweden). A fleet of ten craft was equipped, and there were strenuous efforts to develop colonial trade—strenuous but misguided, since Brandenburg stood no real chance of competing with the maritime powers.

The negative side of Frederick William's economic policies (government regulation, heavy taxes and tolls) had much in common with that of his contemporaries; but its emphatic character derived from the need to support a disproportionately large army. Economic development was also inhibited by the disadvantages under which the towns







*Frederick I achieved the ambition of his life when he crowned himself 'king in Prussia' at Königsberg (above). The pomp and endless celebrations that accompanied the ceremony were characteristic gestures: Frederick was obsessed with imitating the 'Sun King' of France, Louis XIV. Sketch by A. Marzel. (National-Galerie, East Berlin.) Below: the obsequies of Frederick's wife, Sophia Charlotte, the sister of George I of England. Engraving. (Kunstbibliothek, West Berlin.) Right: a nineteenth-century version of a peasant disturbance (1705): painting by Franz von Defregger. (Bayerische Staatgemäldesammlungen, Munich.)*

laboured in competing with rural products sold by a privileged nobility. Recovery from the Thirty Years War was slow, and Brandenburg-Prussia remained a poor land.

The army achieved its first notable success in the Dutch War by defeating the Swedes at Fehrbellin (1675), though Sweden's ally, France, bullied Frederick William into restoring his Pomeranian conquests. After this reverse the elector returned to the unheroic policy of taking subsidies from the seemingly invincible French. Only from 1685 did he ally with the emperor against France; and it was under his son Frederick (1688–1713) that Brandenburg took part in the great coalitions against France.

## The first king of Prussia

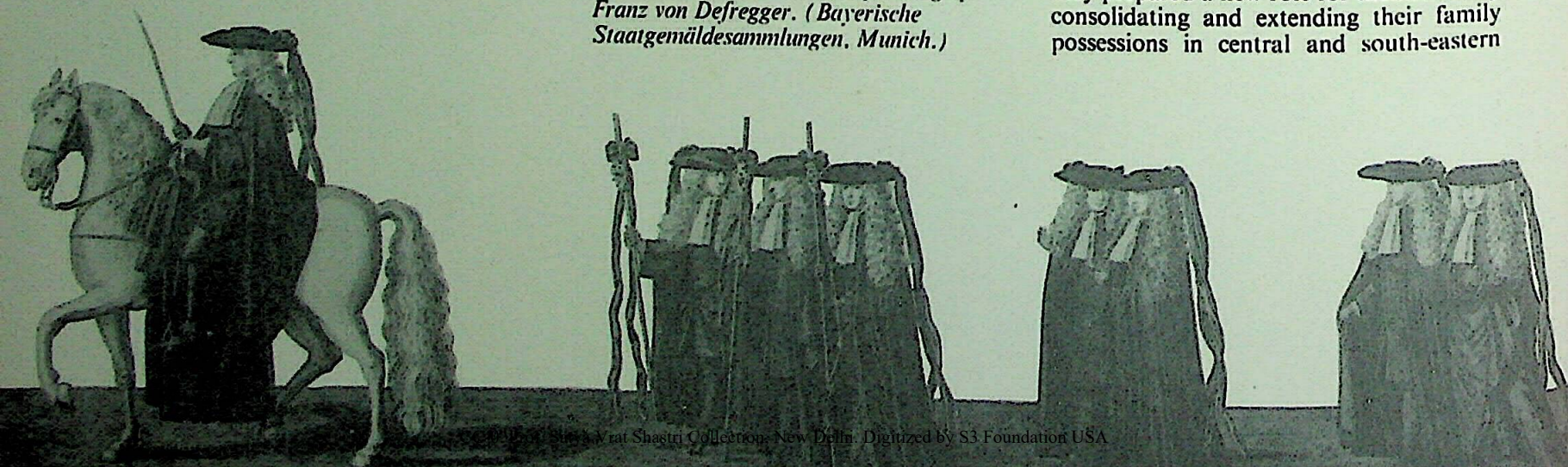
The wars brought the Hohenzollerns no acquisitions of any moment but Frederick acquired a new title. In return for his support in the imminent War of the Spanish Succession, the emperor Leopold I agreed that Frederick should become king of Prussia, Prussia being chosen because it was outside the boundaries of the Holy Roman Empire. In January 1701 Frederick crowned himself and his wife with great pomp.

Frederick I of Prussia was not an outstanding king. Power was largely exercised by his ministers, while the king surrounded himself with ceremonial, spent lavishly, built palaces, and patronised the arts. The Prussian Academy and the University of Halle were founded in his reign.

War and royal expenditure soon put Prussian finances in disarray, and it is likely that, had he lived, the king would have reduced the size of the army at the end of the war rather than sacrifice his pleasures. If this had happened, Prussia would have developed more normally, for better or worse; instead, his successor, Frederick William I, resolutely intensified the militarisation of Prussia.

## Habsburg lands

Although the Austrian Habsburgs failed to make the office of Holy Roman emperor an effective one, in the seventeenth century they prepared a new role for themselves by consolidating and extending their family possessions in central and south-eastern





Europe. From the eighteenth to the twentieth century they were to be most important as rulers of the state that it is convenient to call 'Austria'.

Its nucleus was formed when Charles V handed over the Habsburg lands in central Europe to his brother Ferdinand (1519–21), and Ferdinand secured his own election to the thrones of Bohemia and Hungary. But like the Great Elector's inheritance, the Habsburg lands were a dynastic complex rather than a state. In 1648, at the close of the Thirty Years War, they comprised the German-speaking duchies of Upper Austria, Lower Austria, Styria, Carinthia, the Tyrol and Carniola; the kingdom of Bohemia, with Moravia and Silesia; and, outside the Holy Roman Empire, as much of the kingdoms of Hungary, Croatia and Dalmatia as the Habsburgs were able to defend against the Turks.

The process of state-building began early in the seventeenth century. Territories ceased to be apportioned among members of the family, so that authority was concentrated in the hands of the emperor in Vienna; and the rights of the Estates were considerably reduced in the German-speaking lands. The crushing of the Bohemian revolt, which sparked off the Thirty Years War, provided the opportunity for an even more forceful extension of Habsburg authority: the Protestant heresy was uprooted, the flourishing

and self-assertive Czech towns ruined, and the Czech nobility replaced by Habsburg nominees (mainly German) who depended on the emperor for their continued security. The Bohemian monarchy, previously elective, became hereditary in the Habsburg family.

Although the servants of the emperor forged instruments of central control in the capital, they were never able to use them with the absolute authority of French or even Prussian administrators: there were too many differences of race, language and (in Hungary) religion, too many local laws, customs and institutions to permit the establishment of administrative uniformity.

The guardian—and beneficiary—of local privileges and immunities was the landlord. In the Habsburg lands, as elsewhere in central and eastern Europe, he was becoming more powerful—increasing his rights over the serfs, extorting more labour services from them, and successfully competing with the towns in selling the produce of his lands. Apart from the ravages of the Thirty Years War, which had been terrible in the Habsburg lands north of the Danube, and the deliberate ruin of the Bohemian towns, the problem of depopulation had been accentuated by the emigration of persecuted Protestants. The backwardness of the Habsburg lands was perpetuated by neglect of the towns and by the drain of

money, men and materials in the struggle against the two great enemies of the Habsburgs: France and Ottoman Turkey.

## The Habsburgs' enemies

France and Turkey had been traditional allies since the early sixteenth century, just as France and the Habsburgs had been traditional enemies. At that time the Habsburgs seemed on the point of encircling and destroying France: from the mid-seventeenth century the situation was reversed. Spain, under another branch of the Habsburgs, was in decline; the Holy Roman Empire was weak and divided; Habsburg Austria seemed exhausted, remote and distracted by the Turkish menace. Louis XIV, the 'Sun King', made France the greatest power in Europe, expanding her borders by a series of successful aggressions and even intriguing to become Holy Roman emperor.

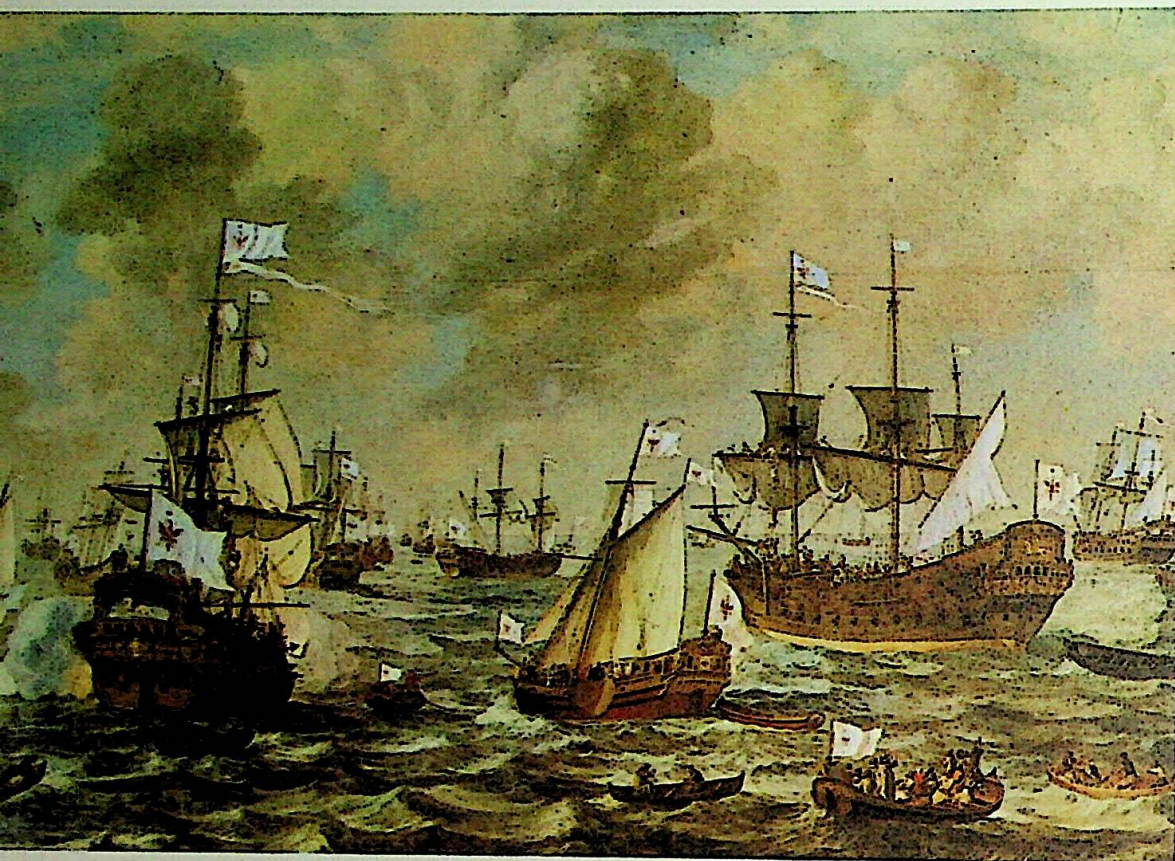
Leopold I (1658–1705) was preoccupied with the struggle against the Turks in the first half of his reign, and made no attempt to resist French aggressions until the Dutch War of 1672–9 (significantly, during a truce with the Turks). The great Austrian effort against France occurred only after the Turks had begun to retreat: from 1688 Austria took a most important part in the great coalitions that first checked and then humbled France.

## Habsburg Hungary and Transylvania

The Turks were an even more pressing problem than Louis XIV. Their armies had menaced Europe for 200 years, and had almost invariably defeated the armies of Christian states: only a strip of Hungary barred them from Vienna itself. Habsburg Hungary, hardly more than a quarter of the old kingdom, was effectively controlled by a turbulent nobility jealous of its liberties. The monarchy remained elective: the nobility claimed the right to resist the king if their privileges were infringed, legislated in their own interest through the Estates, paid no taxes, and nominated the head of their own armed forces. Hungarian Protestants, plotters and nobles who believed their liberties threatened could look for







protection to a powerful neighbour: Transylvania.

In origin Transylvania was a breakaway state from Habsburg Hungary. By 1648, thanks to the statesmanship of Bethen Gabor (1613–29) and Gyorgy Rackoczi I (1630–48), it occupied almost half the territory of old Hungary and was virtually independent of the Turks. Its Calvinist rulers tolerated Catholic and Protestant alike, adding an ideological element to the hostility of the devoutly Catholic Habsburgs.

The ambitious Gyorgy Rackoczi II led Transylvania to disaster. He joined the Swedish king, Charles X, in attacking Poland; and while he was being defeated there, the Turks invaded Transylvania. After a confused struggle Rackoczi was defeated and killed (1660), as was his successor Janos Kemeny (1662). The Turks overran Transylvania and prepared to attack Habsburg Hungary.

When they took the great fortress of Neuhausel in 1663, Christian Europe rallied to the defence of Austria with men and money—an indication that the medieval

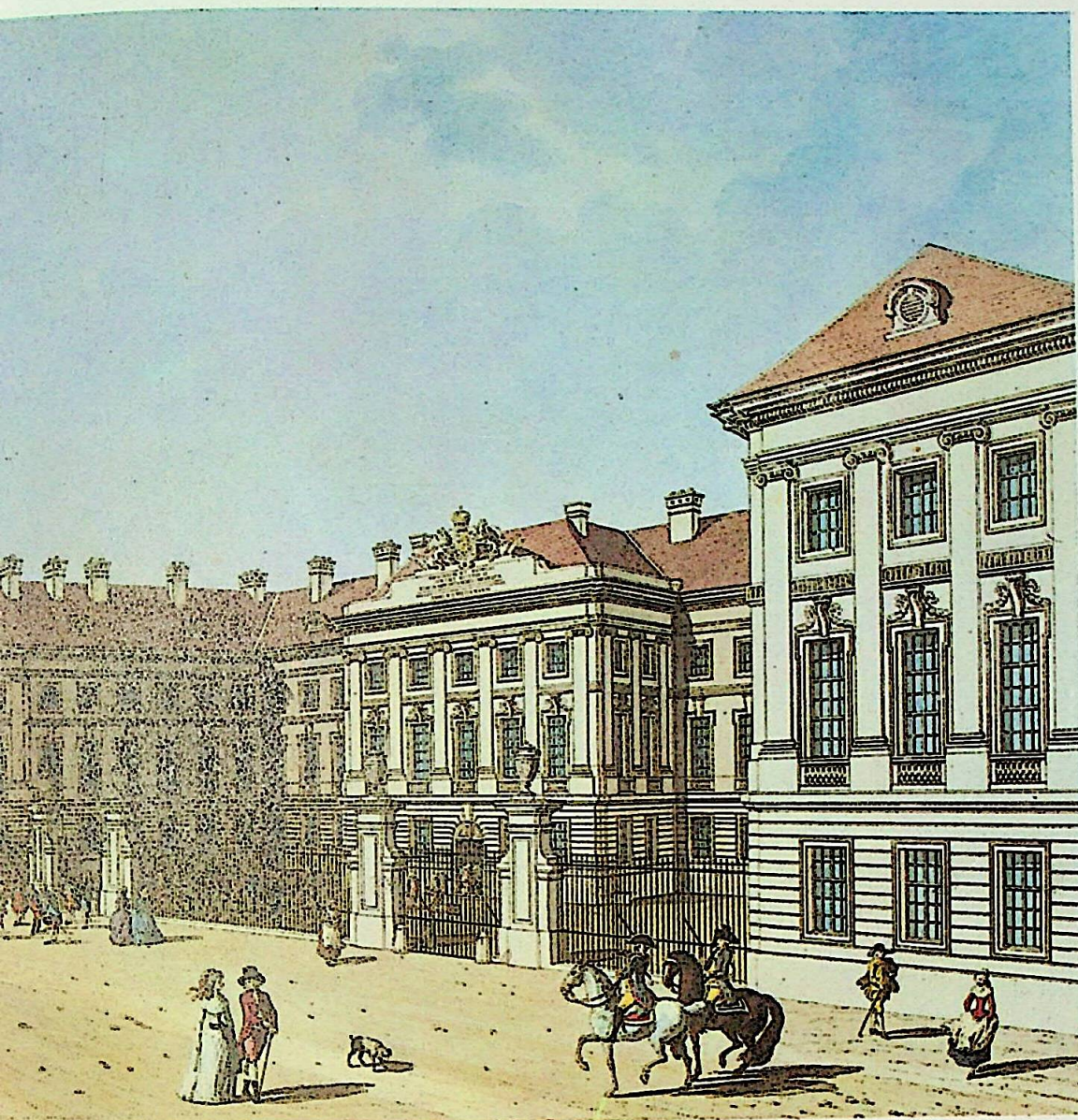
conception of a Christian community was still not entirely defunct: even Louis XIV sent 6,000 men. The subsequent defeat of the Turks at St Gotthard (1664), by an army under the imperial general Montecuccoli, was the first indication that military supremacy had passed to the Christian states.

The decisive nature of this event was obscured by the haste with which the emperor Leopold made peace—partly because Christian losses had been heavy, partly through caution, and partly because he was becoming preoccupied with the Spanish succession problem. The treaty of Vasvar left the Turkish position in Hungary still unshaken.

The Hungarian magnates, incensed at what they deemed Habsburg treachery in not pursuing the defeated Turk, plunged into an orgy of incompetent conspiracy. Leopold made this the excuse for a military occupation of Hungary (1670), but the subsequent attempt to suppress Hungarian liberties, end toleration of Protestants and 'put the Hungarians into Czech trousers'







*Much of the Great Elector's success stemmed from adopting the methods of the great Protestant states, Sweden and Holland; however, his attempt to make Brandenburg a maritime and colonial power was ill-conceived.*

*Far left: the Brandenburg fleet, the brief creation of a Dutch adventurer, Raule. Painting by Lieve Verschuir.*

*(Charlottenburg Schloss, West Berlin.) Above: the military medical academy, Vienna. Engraving by Schutz and Ziegler. (National Bibliothek, Vienna.)*

*Left: woman in her kitchen; painting by Horemans. (Bayerische Staatgemäldesammlungen, Munich.)*

was premature. Many Hungarians joined Imre Thokoly in northern Hungary, where, abetted by the Transylvanians and aided by the French, he conducted a ferocious and successful resistance. In 1681—just in time—Leopold realised his mistake and restored the Hungarians' lost liberties.

## The last crusade

This action deprived Thokoly of much of his support and forced him to turn to the Turks, who were in any case preparing to march on Vienna. The Austrians appeared powerless to stop them, and in July 1683 the Habsburg capital was besieged by a great Turkish army. Again Europe came to the defence of Austria, all the more effectively since a great reforming pope, Innocent XI, ceaselessly exhorted and negotiated with the powers. Most of the German states sent contingents of troops and, largely through the pope's influence, in March 1683 Leopold secured the alliance of John Sobieski, king of Poland. In September, when Vienna was close to capitulation after a heroic defence, a cosmopolitan army of 70,000, commanded by Sobieski, swept down from the Kahlenburg and routed the Turks.

Vienna was saved, but the immediate fruits of victory were lost through dissensions among the victors. On this occasion Leopold decided to pursue his advantage. At Ratisbon (1684) he recognised all Louis XIV's gains since the War of Devolution in return for a twenty-year truce that left him a free hand in the east. The Turks were expelled from Hungary only after fifteen years of intermittent fighting, long periods of Austrian inactivity being enforced by the war against France (1688–97) which broke out despite the truce of Ratisbon. At last, in 1697, the brilliant Eugene of Savoy took command of the Austrian army and overwhelmed the last effective Turkish force at the battle of Zenta. By the treaty of Carlowitz (1699), the Turks ceded to the Habsburgs all of Hungary and Transylvania except Temesvar in the south-east.

## The Danubian monarchy

The enlarged kingdom of Hungary became part of the Habsburg state in that the Hungarian Estates agreed to make the crown hereditary and renounced the right of insurrection (1686). But the Hungarians retained most of their privileges as well as their suspicion of the Habsburgs; despite the conciliatory tactics of the Austrians, there was a serious revolt under Francis Rackoczi (1703–11). Transylvania, where the tradition of independence was even stronger, was treated with equal moderation; it remained a separate Habsburg province, not subject to Hungary.

In the course of the eighteenth century it became clear that if the Habsburgs had failed to create a highly centralised state of



obedient citizens like the Prussians, they had achieved a durable success. Despite its vicissitudes, the great Austrian-Bohemian-Hungarian bloc was to be one of the great European powers down to 1918.

## Poland

The relief of Vienna was the last triumph of old Poland, and an appropriately chivalrous one. For although the largest state in Europe after Russia, late seventeenth-century Poland was manifestly in decline because of her antiquated political and social structure.

The monarchy was elective, and therefore weak. Taxes and other important decisions required the approval of a parliament of nobles (the Sejm) that was paralysed by increasingly strict application of the right of any member to use the 'free veto' which at once dissolved the Sejm. In practice the local assemblies, also dominated by the nobility, were more powerful. Such a situation invited intrigues on the part of other states: while the Poles themselves, lacking any rational machinery for reaching decisions, frequently formed rival armed confederacies to forward the interests of the various factions. Civil war, or the threat of civil war, loomed at every crisis.

The nobles, who were the only beneficiaries of Polish 'liberties', resisted all reforms. About a tenth of the population were noble, though wealth and power were engrossed by a few great families, of whom the lesser nobility tended to become clients. The economy had been dominated by the nobility since the Turkish conquest of the Black Sea ports in the fifteenth century, which destroyed overland trade with the Baltic. In Poland, too, the position of the serfs was deteriorating, while noble privileges—above all the right of nobles to import and export without paying duties—made it impossible for the towns to flourish.

The impact of war on an anarchical and economically backward kingdom was bound to be disastrous; and Poland was almost constantly at war in the second half of the seventeenth century. In 1654 the struggle against the rebellious Dnieper Cossacks, which had dragged on since 1648, was transformed by the intervention of Russia: and the Russian example encouraged Charles X of Sweden to invade in the next year. In the course of the war the Swedes twice overran Poland, which was eventually saved by the help of Sweden's enemies, Denmark and Austria, and a volte-face by Brandenburg. At the Peace of Oliva (1660) Poland renounced her suzerainty over East Prussia; at Andrusovo, after seven more years' fighting against the Russians, she ceded the areas around Smolensk and Kiev.

The loss of territory was considerable, though mainly of areas that had long been in dispute; but the devastation caused by the war was much more serious. Before



*The failure of the Turks to take Vienna, and their defeat at the hands of the relieving army under John Sobieski, marked the end of the Ottoman threat to Europe.*

*Henceforth the supremacy of their artillery and men o'war was to make Europeans irresistible wherever they went.*

*Above: the battle before the walls of Vienna, rendered with considerable vigour and imaginative force. Notice that the Turks are shown still bombarding the city as the Christian army attacks. Sobieski is in the foreground. Anonymous seventeenth-century painting. (Heeresgeschichtliches Museum, Vienna.)*





Poland could recover, she was at war with the Turks, who in 1672 invaded Podolia in south-east Poland. Despite John Sobieski's great victory at Chotin (1673), Podolia was ceded to the Turks in 1676.

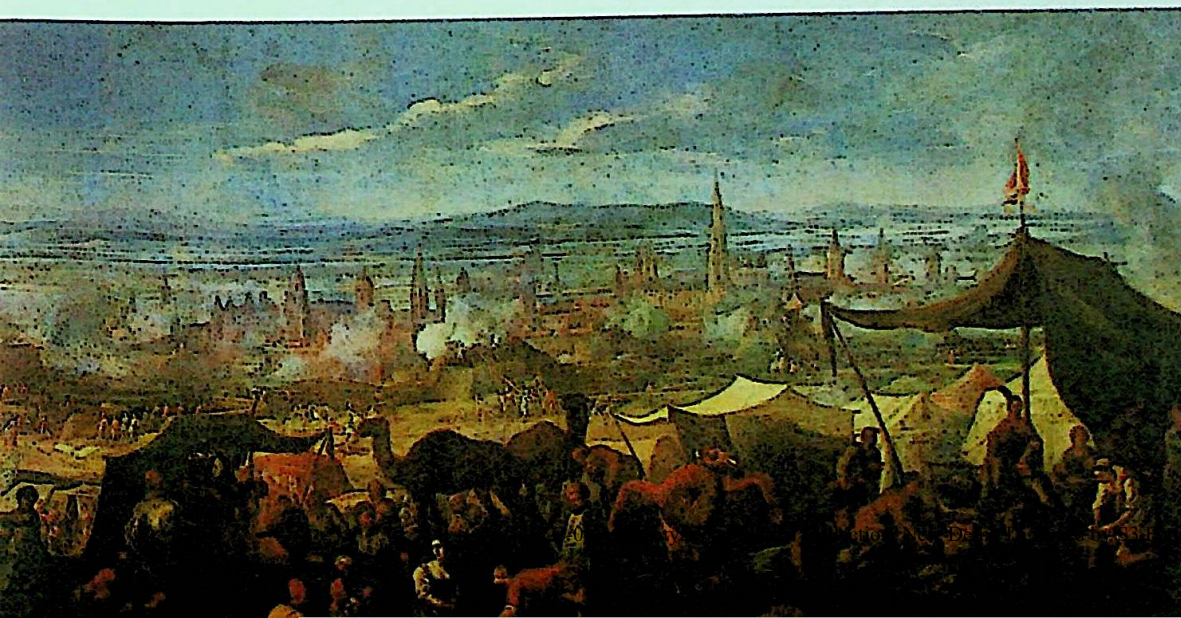
The wave of national feeling provoked by the Turkish invasion led to the election of Sobieski as king of Poland (1673–96). He was a much more forceful ruler than his predecessors, John Casimir (1648–68) and Michael Wisnowiecki (1669–73), and it was he who led the Christian army that defeated the Turks before Vienna (1683). But he proved unable to cure Poland's internal ills; indeed, it can be argued that Sobieski became obsessed by his crusading zeal, and sacrificed Polish interests to a war from which Austria was the main beneficiary.

The election of the Duke of Saxony, Augustus the Strong, as king of Poland (1697) inaugurated a long period of anarchy. Augustus's right to the crown was contested first by the Prince de Conti and later by Stanislas Leszczynski, backed by Sweden. The civil war that ensued was ended only in 1717, with a treaty of exhaustion that solved nothing.

## The Ottoman Empire

Turkish power, too, was declining, though the resources and manpower of the empire—stretching over North Africa, eastern Asia and the Balkans—enabled it to sustain catastrophic losses and even to make spasmodic recoveries.

The seventeenth-century crisis was at first sight of the sort that many states had passed through and survived. The sultan ruled as a despot, usually through a grand vizier; and the fate of the empire depended on the abilities of one or the other. Weak sultans were governed by household and harem intrigue, and the empire suffered accordingly: the administration became corrupt and incompetent, there were provincial revolts, palace revolutions and military setbacks—very much the pattern of Ibrahim I's reign (1640–48) and the early years of Mehmed IV (1648–87).



*Left: a view of the Turkish camp during the siege of Vienna; the tens of thousands of tents and pack-animals gave it the appearance of a city surrounding the city. Anonymous seventeenth-century painting.*



An able grand vizier could soon put this right. When Mehmed Koprulu took office in 1656, he conducted a brutal purge of inefficient and hostile officials, restored Ottoman finances by rooting out corruption, put down two dangerous revolts, and re-invigorated the armed forces. The navy defeated the Venetians and recaptured Lemnos and Tenedos (1657), which had been lost under Ibrahim; the army invaded Transylvania, defeated Gyorgy Rackoczi II and re-established Turkish suzerainty.

But the revival left untouched the fundamental weakness of the empire: the Turks had failed to make a satisfactory transition from nomadic warriors to masters of a settled empire. Warriors held land in return for military service, and both they and the sultan looked to plunder from successful warfare to supply much of their needs. Commerce was despised, and left to European companies and non-Muslim subjects (Greeks, Armenians, Jews); even the administration of the empire was largely run by the 'Phanariot' Greeks of Constantinople.

Both the system and the outlook behind it were anachronistic. Expansion had effectively ended, and fighting on ravaged borderlands provided little plunder. Administrative negligence only increased the difficulty of raising taxes from peasants who rarely used money. The hereditary principle began to undermine military organisation: landowners evaded service and passed on their holdings to their children, whether or not they were of military age or inclination; and the famous regular army of Janissaries ceased to be recruited from the sons of Balkan Christians and became a hereditary caste.

The Ottoman crisis was doubly serious because the West was making important technological advances. This superiority quickly became apparent in the conduct of warfare: in 1664, at the battle of St Gotthard, European professional infantry and mobile field artillery smashed the Turkish cavalry. The Turks used unwieldy heavy artillery for siege operations, but the mystique—and social predominance—of the mounted warrior made it unthinkable for them to abandon battle cavalry. Social and cultural conservatism made decline inevitable.

Under Mehmed Koprulu's son, the able Fazil Ahmed (1661–76), Turkey managed to escape the consequences of St Gotthard and win fresh victories over weaker opponents: the Venetians were driven from Crete (1669) and Podolia was taken from Poland (1676). But Fazil Ahmed's successor, the grossly overconfident Kara Mustapha, led the Turks to the disaster before Vienna; and subsequent campaigns proved that, though the Turks might rally, European arms had acquired an unmistakable overall superiority. Two hundred and fifty years after the Turks had captured Constantinople, the Turkish threat to Europe disappeared, never to return.



*Prince Eugene of Savoy (1663–1736), the greatest commander who ever served the Austrian Habsburgs. Though a Savoyard prince, Eugene was born in Paris, and only lack of advancement under Louis XIV caused him to take service with Austria. He took part in the reconquest of Hungary and the War of the League of Augsburg, but his first resounding success as a commander was his victory over the Turks at Zenta (1697). He and Marlborough formed a*

*remarkable and harmonious partnership in the War of the Spanish Succession, and together they won such great victories as Blenheim (1704) and Oudenarde (1708). Eugene's military career was crowned by new victories over the Turks in the campaigns of 1716–18, and he remained one of the emperor's most trusted and influential advisers until his death. Anonymous painting. (Heeresgeschichtliches Museum, Vienna.)*





# The Age of Reason

*Reason and utility replace tradition and authority; influence of 'English philosophy'; the limitations of Enlightenment; the reaction of sentiment and spontaneity.*

## Utility and reason

The Age of Reason or Enlightenment, the *siècle des lumières*, the *Aufklärung*: all terms commonly applied to the period from about 1715 to the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789, and all expressive of a decisive shift in the way men thought. Until the Enlightenment, institutions and beliefs were largely determined by authority, custom and tradition, supported and sanctified by religious doctrine. Change could be justified only by appealing to the past, as Protestants appealed to Scripture and the practice of the primitive Church, and English Parliamentarians to the supposed liberties of the fifteenth century. The achievement of the Enlightenment was to substitute reason for tradition and the criterion of utility for authority, and, in doing so, to create a secular humanitarianism and a secular conception of progress which have remained characteristic of modern man.

## 'The English philosophy'

Many of the ideas of thinkers and writers in the Age of Reason were not new, though they had previously been the property of the few. They had appeared in England as early as the sixteen-eighties, when John Locke (1632–1704) produced a political philosophy in which the government was a trustee for the people, who had the right to rebel if their trust was abused. His *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* examined the nature of the human mind and argued that ideas were not innate but derived from the experience of the senses. Both of these theories were subversive—of a divinely ordained human authority and of the religious idea of man as born in sin yet capable of distinguishing good from evil; they implied that the state should be rationally ordered for the benefit of its citizens, and that man and society could be studied and altered.

The achievements of Sir Isaac Newton

(1642–1727) held out the possibility of understanding the world by scientific investigation. They revealed a universe that functioned according to unvarying laws without divine intervention, making God a 'great watchmaker' who had created the universe, set it in motion and then withdrawn. Beliefs from which the whole apparatus of Christian dogma was absent—Deism, 'natural religion'—appeared in England very early in the eighteenth century.

England thus provided many fundamental elements of the thought of the Enlightenment, which in the eighteenth century was often called 'the English philosophy'. English influence was increased by

*Above: coppersmiths at work. A plate from Diderot's Encyclopædia, which served also as a manifesto in favour of rationalism and freedom of thought. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)*



the admiration felt for her 'free institutions', relatively fluid class structure, and policy of religious toleration; and all the more so since they were accompanied by a growing power and prosperity.

### The *philosophes*

Just because of the greater freedom of English society, Enlightenment ideas never crystallised into a doctrine of opposition and attack. In France, an educated class as large as that in England confronted arbitrary rule, entrenched privilege and a powerful Church—all strong enough to oppress but no longer efficient or confident enough to suppress. It was therefore in France that the most articulate and rigorous criticisms of the old order were made; and it is the French writers called *philosophes* who epitomise the Age of Reason.

The *philosophes* were not an organised group, and were by no means in complete agreement either theoretically or practically. They were not even 'philosophers' but rather popularisers and propagandists, explaining and applying scientific method—observation, experiment, generalisation—to the different departments of human life, and attacking prejudice, privilege and intolerance.

If they had no common programme, they did have many attitudes in common. The attack on religion occupied much of their energy—not unreasonably, since religion was the authority that justified all other authorities. They were in fundamental agreement in desiring a secular society in which men obeyed the law rather than an arbitrary power, in which there was freedom of speech, writing, inquiry and dissent, and in which cruelty was no longer part of judicial processes or punishments. Without necessarily being democrats or egalitarians, they disliked aristocratic privileges and the disabilities under which the peasants laboured. They shared an enthusiasm for practical improvements, whether industrial or political, akin to their devotion to the empirical methods of science and their contempt for metaphysics. Finally, almost all the *philosophes* assumed that, in principle, all men were capable of understanding the truth, and wrote accordingly. It can be argued that their passion for lucidity, simplicity and order limited their profundity; whether or not that is so, it gave their writings an impact which can still be felt.

### The salons

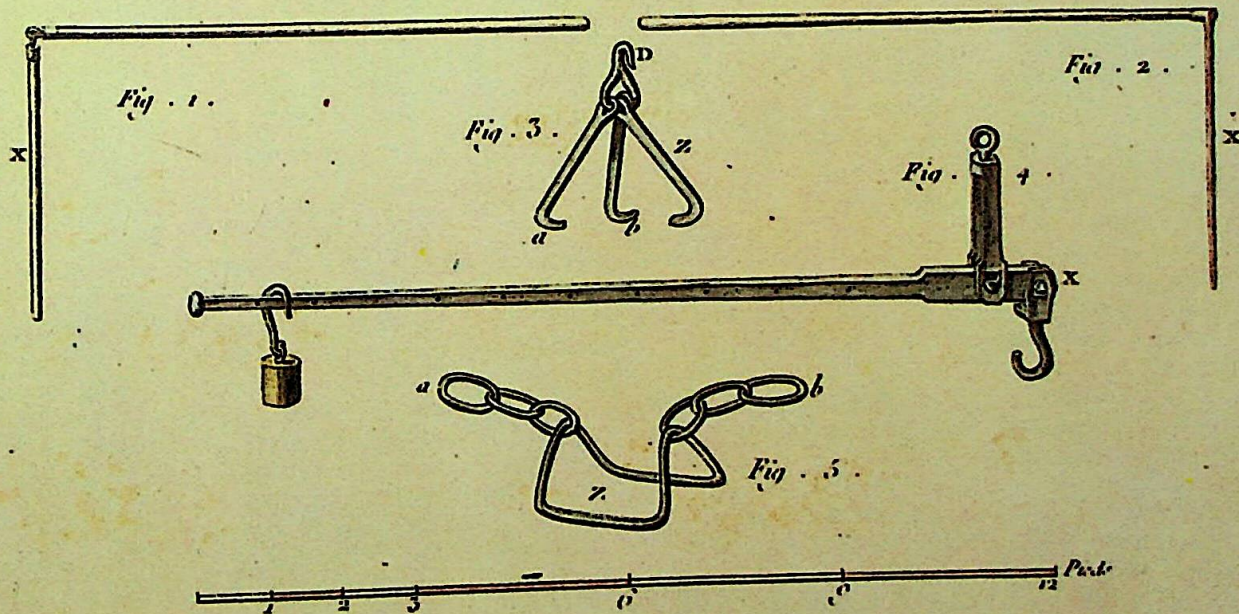
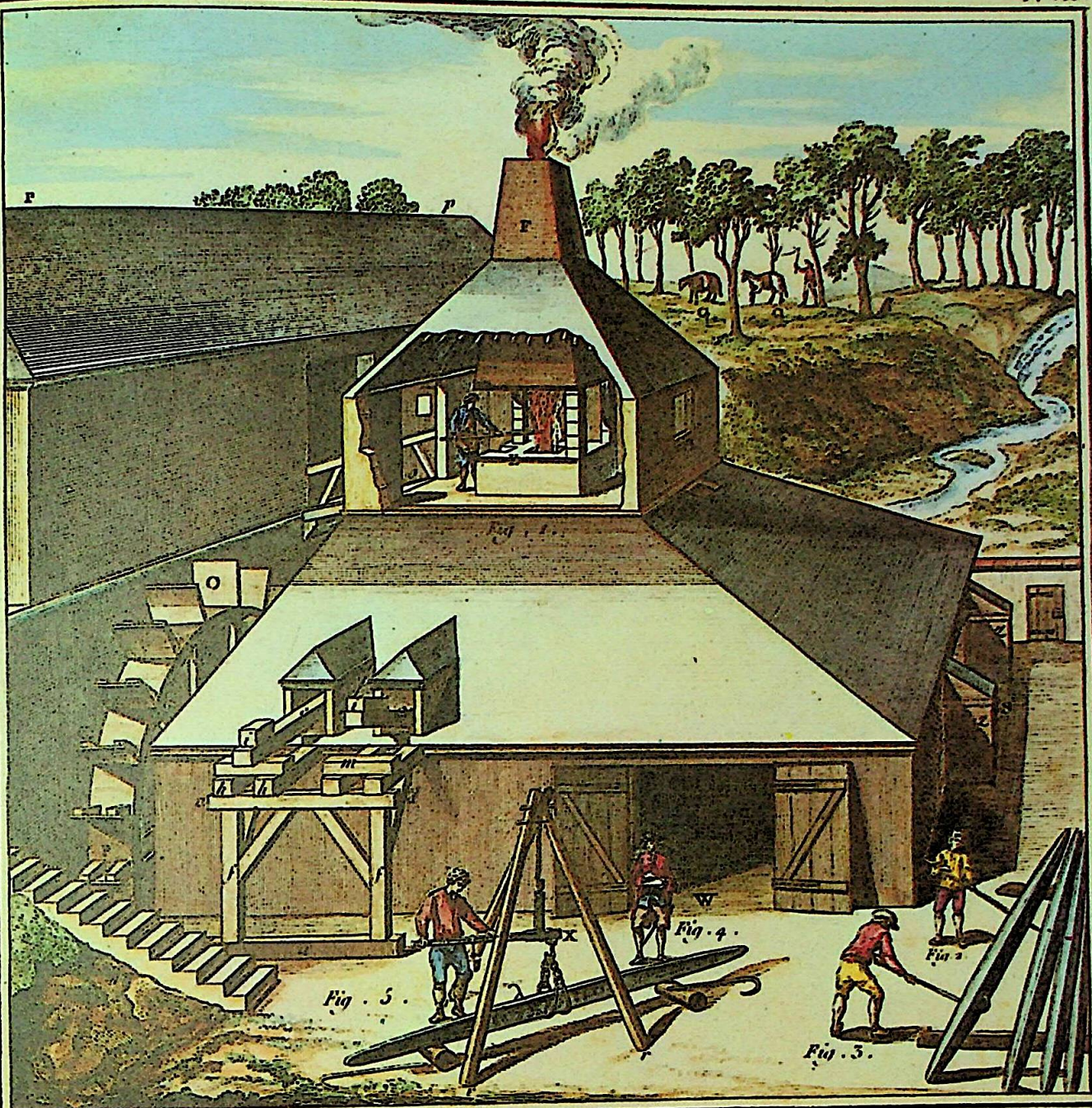
French society in the eighteenth century was an ideal one for the diffusion of subversive ideas. Paris was the intellectual capital of Europe, and the Parisian salons, presided over by wealthy, fashionable and intelligent women such as Mme Geoffrin and Mme du Deffand, were arenas in which the ideas of the Enlightenment were tested



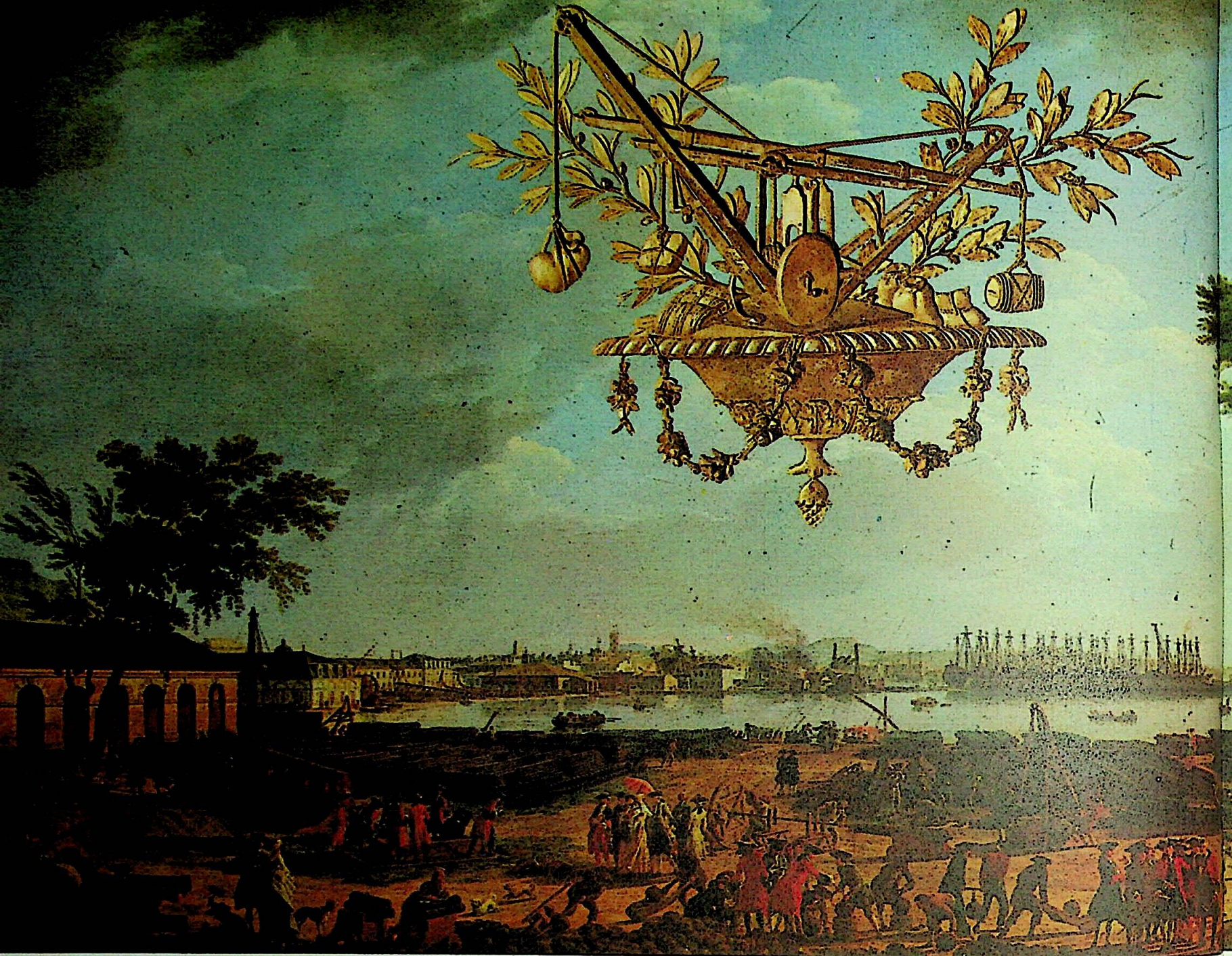
*Above: Antoine Parmentier. Painting by Colson. (Musée de Versailles.) The agronomist Parmentier (1737–1813) is shown surrounded by reference books and studying an ear of maize. His most important achievement was to prove that it was possible to grow potatoes on soil previously considered uncultivable, which he did on the plain of Sablons.*

*Such practical scientific activity was characteristic of the Age of Reason: the famous Encyclopaedia consisted of 17 volumes of text and no less than 11 volumes of plates, very many of which illustrated technical processes in some detail. A typical example is the plate (right) showing an ironworks and instruments. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)*









and refined. They provided a receptive audience for manuscript works which the author dare not publish (frequently the case until the middle of the century), and a school for purity and clarity of language, the outstanding characteristics of eighteenth-century French prose.

The prestige of French literature facilitated the diffusion of the Enlightenment abroad. Under Louis XIV, France had become the cultural arbiter of Europe and French the language of polite society. Every German princeling built a miniature Versailles where only French was spoken and only French books were read. In the eighteenth century, France ceased to dominate Europe politically while retaining her cultural supremacy: but the salons replaced Versailles as the avant-garde of that culture. Both Frederick II of Prussia and Catherine II of Russia spoke French for preference, read the works of the philosophes, and claimed to be their disciples. Even as late as the seventeen-seventies, the great English historian,

Gibbon, could assert that he thought and wrote best in French. Such was the European preoccupation with what the French did, said and wrote that the German-born philosophe, Grimm, compiled a regular Parisian newsletter which circulated the courts of Europe.

## Voltaire

In the seventeen-twenties the Enlightenment was still very much an underground movement, its attitudes expressed in published works only in indirect or ironical terms. Even at its height, criticisms of Church or state were guardedly phrased unless the work was published anonymously and/or abroad.

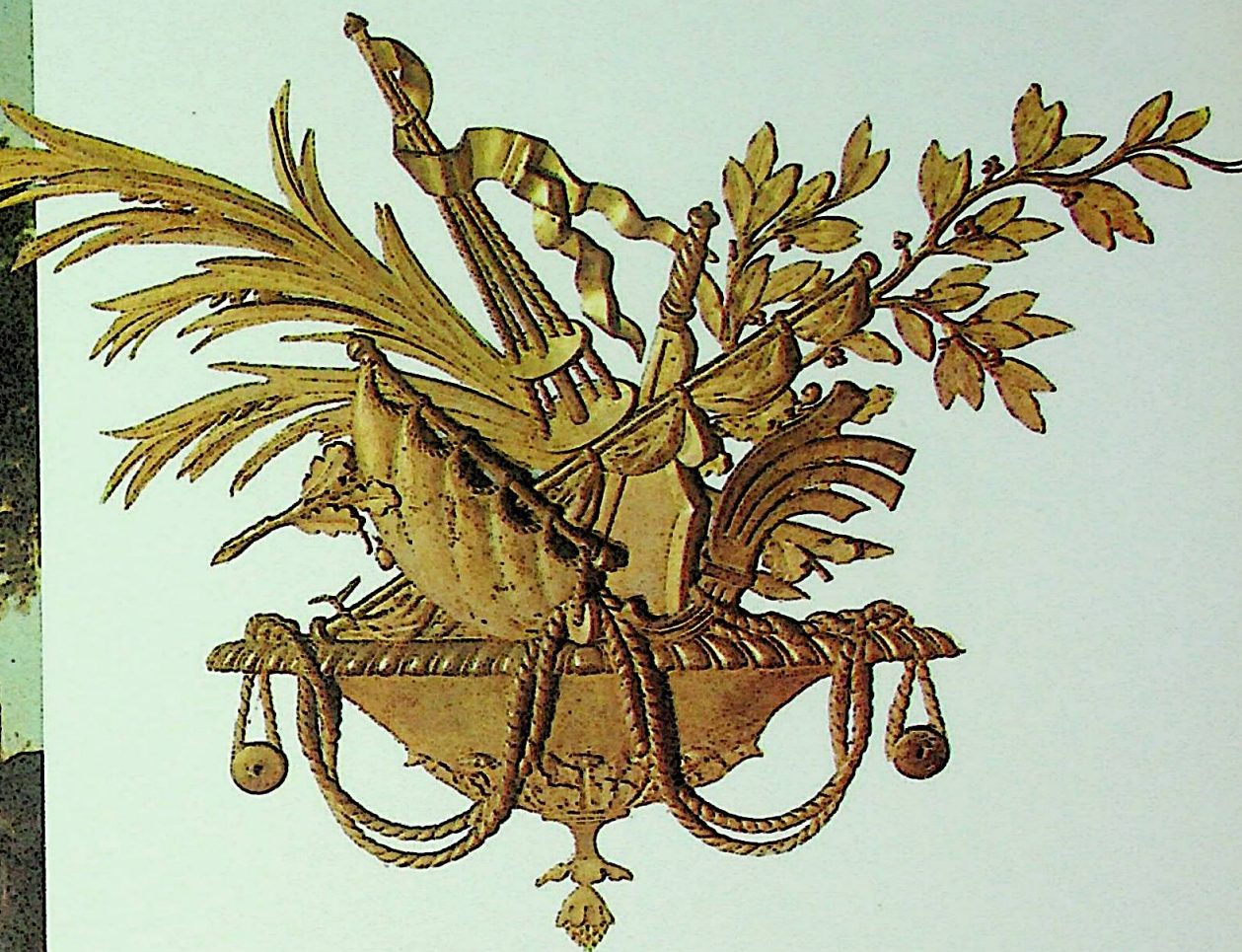
A full-scale attack on the Church appeared as early as 1697: Pierre Bayle's *Historical and Critical Dictionary*, published in Holland, was to provide ammunition against Scriptural history and theological dogmas that was still being used several generations later. Other published works

were more cautious, notably Montesquieu's *Persian Letters* (1721), in which two Persian residents in Paris compare French customs with their own. The comparison implied not only that French society was riddled with absurdities and injustices, but that its institutions had no universal validity.

At this date, however, the career of the greatest figure of the Age of Reason had already begun. François-Marie Arouet, known as Voltaire (1694–1788), was the universal genius of the age, by turns poet, playwright, historian, scientific populariser, anti-clerical polemicist and writer of picaresque or exotic 'philosophical' tales. His enduring fame rests upon his prose writings, which are unsurpassed models of clarity, economy and elegance, shot through with malicious wit and irony.

Voltaire knew the injustices of the existing order at first hand: he was beaten up by an aristocrat's bullies, some of his books were burnt by the public hangman, and much of his life was spent in flight and exile. During one such exile, passed in England, he wrote





*In the eighteenth century, France emerged as the chief mercantile, naval and colonial power on the continent.*

*Above: the port of Toulon, the principal French naval base, in 1755.*

*Left: fish merchants at Dieppe (detail). Paintings by Claude-Joseph Vernet. (Musée de la Marine, Paris.)*

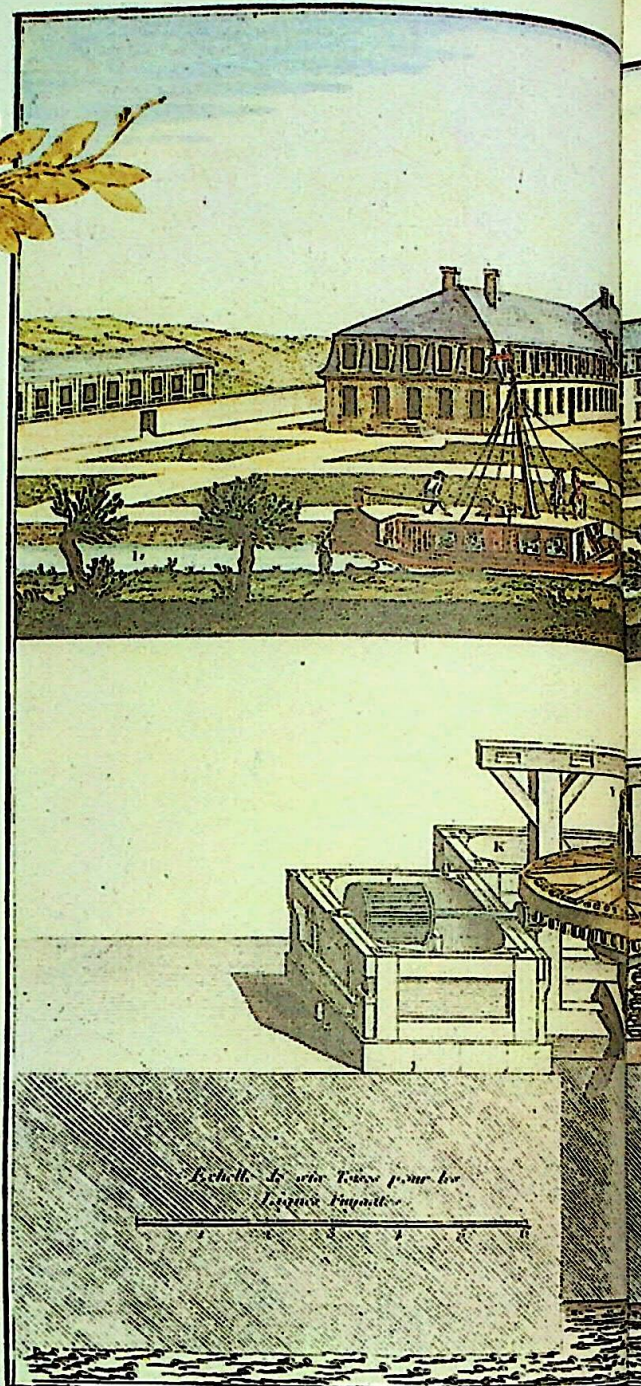
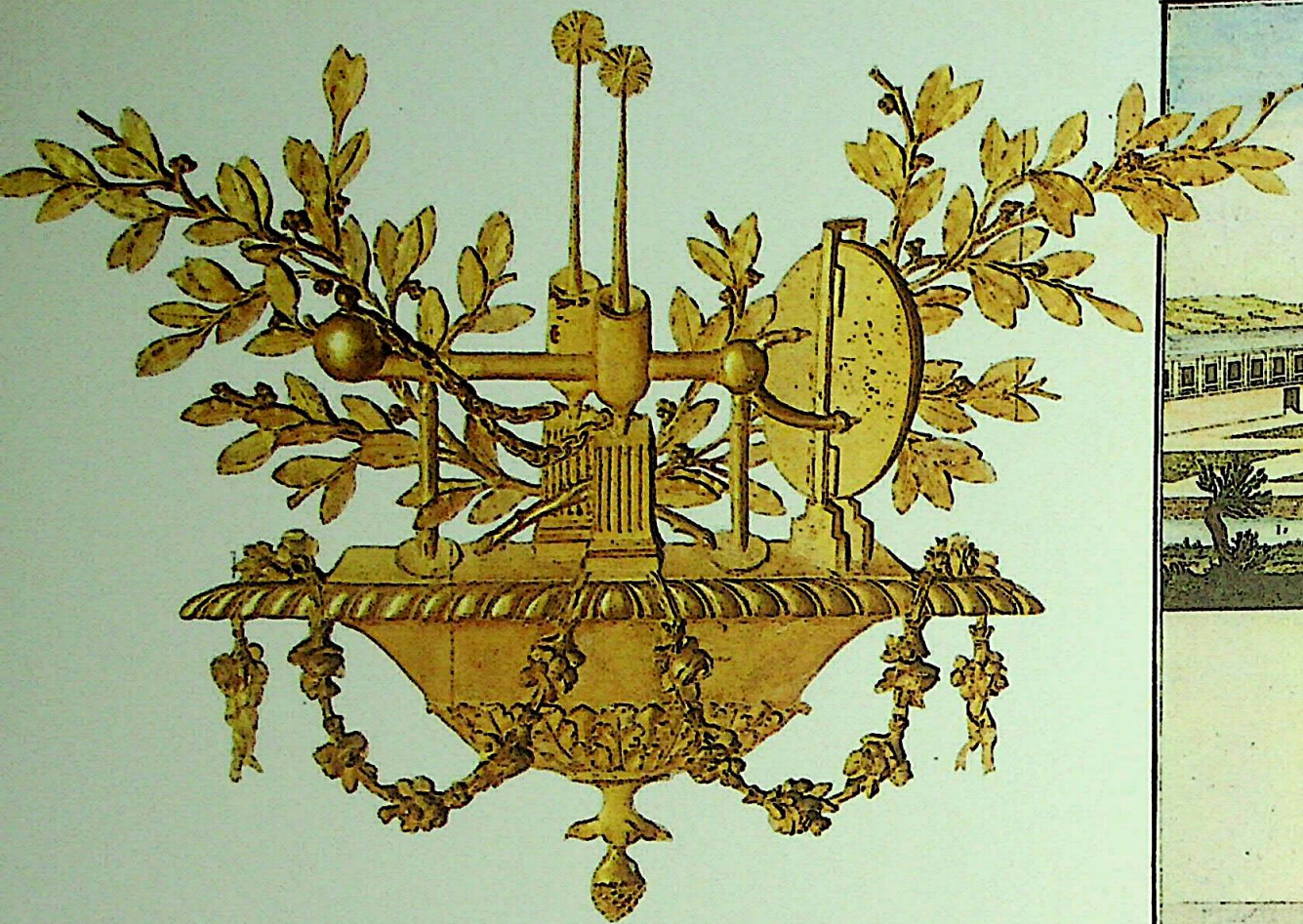
*The gilded wooden emblems, carved by Rousseau, represent (left) commerce and (right) the navy. (Musée de Versailles.)*

his *Lettres Philosophiques*, the most important piece of French propaganda for English thought and institutions.

Voltaire's best known and funniest book is *Candide* (1759), one of the picaresque tales, in which the ingenuous Candide wanders the world, learning the hard way the inaccuracy of his tutor Pangloss's belief that this is "the best of all possible worlds". At last he determines to cultivate his garden — that is, to improve the world by practical activity. *Candide* was in part suggested by the terrible Lisbon earthquake of 1755, an event of some importance in undermining the doctrine of a beneficent providence.

Voltaire evidently came to the same conclusion as Candide, for his last years were spent in vigorous and often effective campaigns to right injustices. His most famous success was the rehabilitation of Jean Calas, a Protestant victim of the religious prejudice of the French law courts.





## The great *Encyclopaedia*

By the middle of the eighteenth century, Enlightenment attitudes were becoming established and widespread. Many of the philosophes—Helvétius, Holbach, Morelly, La Mettrie, Condorcet—took up increasingly radical positions, formulating atheist, materialist, determinist and even communist systems. La Mettrie, for example, called one of his books *Man the Machine* (1747).

A utopian element was also becoming more pronounced: if man had not fallen, if he was formed by his sense-experiences, he could be improved by changing his environment: if he was capable of reasoning, he was capable of virtue and happiness. All mysteries would be revealed in time by science, all injustice abolished by reason and good will: earth could be made a secular paradise.

The epitome of the age was the great *Encyclopaedia*, which appeared in twenty-eight volumes from 1751 to 1772, despite sporadic attempts to suppress it. Its editor was Denis Diderot (1713–84), one of the

most important philosophes, initially with the collaboration of the mathematician d'Alembert.

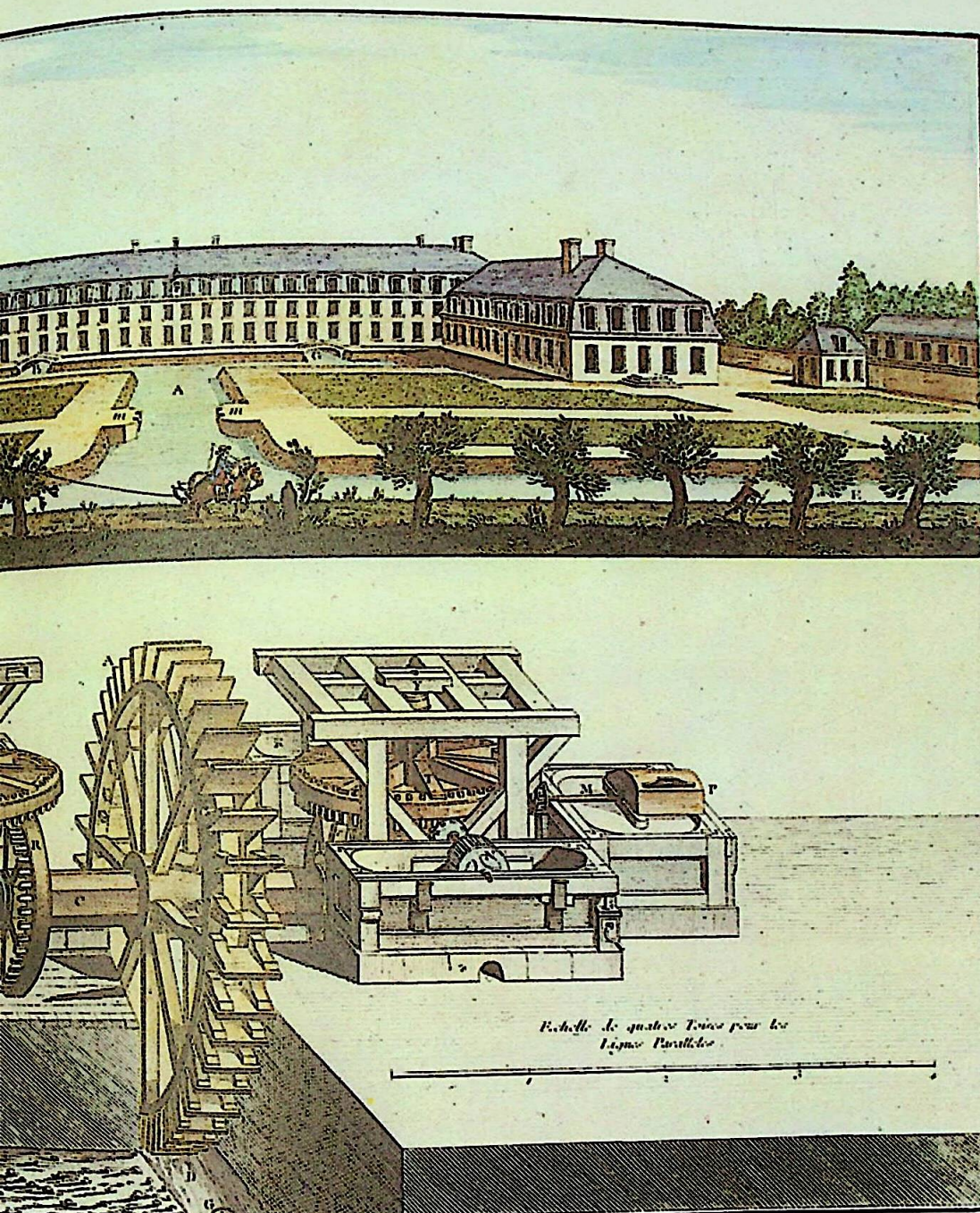
The *Encyclopaedia* was at once a monumental work of reference and a polemic against absolutism, Christianity and privilege. Almost all the great figures of the Enlightenment contributed, providing what amounted to a thinly disguised summary of 'philosophical' ideas. It was also a compendium of scientific and technical information, describing and illustrating in careful detail the craft and industrial processes that had previously been jealously guarded secrets—an impressive example of the philosophes' enthusiasm for empirical science and the improvement of life by practical means.

## The study of man

Nations other than France contributed to the Enlightenment, though readers outside England and France tended to be more influenced by the French philosophes than by







Aspects of science: allegorical, technical, human.

Far left: the sciences: emblem by Rousseau in gilded wood. (Musée de Versailles.)

Left: the Anglée paper-factory near Montargis. Engraving from the Encyclopaedia. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)

Below left: Portrait of Lavoisier by Brossard de Beaulieu. Lavoisier was the founder of modern chemistry; during the French Revolution his aristocratic birth was enough to send him to the guillotine. (Musée de Versailles.)

writers in their own countries. Such were the Italian Beccaria, whose *Of Crimes and Punishments* (1764) advocated a more rational and humane penal system, and the German dramatist and critic Lessing (1729–81) who, like Diderot, attempted to create a realistic middle-class drama. The Scottish Enlightenment was of particular distinction, and in David Hume (1711–76) produced an outstanding philosopher.

Another Italian, Giambattista Vico (1688–1744), outlined an evolutionary historical philosophy that cut across such Voltairean simplifications as 'reason versus fanaticism', providing insights that were only developed later: a significant comment on contemporary preoccupations. The most substantial achievements of the age were of another kind, resulting from the use of scientific empiricism to create mechanical 'Newtonian' models which operated according to immutable laws.

This was particularly true of the study of man and society. Charles de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu (1699–1755), already

famous as the author of *Persian Letters*, was the effective founder of sociology and the study of comparative institutions. Despite its aberrations, his *Spirit of the Laws* (1748) represents the first attempt to analyse the interaction of religion, institutions, geography, climate and history in the formation of societies.

Similar developments were taking place in the study of history. In *The Age of Louis XIV* (1751) Voltaire abandoned the traditional narrative treatment of politics and war, and presented a picture of French society as a whole, relating the manners, customs and beliefs of the period to the political, economic and administrative structure. The masterpiece of eighteenth-century historical writing was undoubtedly Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1766–88), a work of massive synthesis, written with urbane irony in rolling, balanced periods.

Experiments in improving agricultural and industrial production were one of the enthusiasms of the eighteenth century; and

the larger questions of 'political economy' also became an object of systematic study. Theoretical advances were made by the 'Physiocrats' in France and, much more decisively, by the Scot Adam Smith. In *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) Smith analysed such fundamental processes as division of labour and provided the theoretical groundwork for the nineteenth-century belief in unfettered individual enterprise.

## The natural sciences

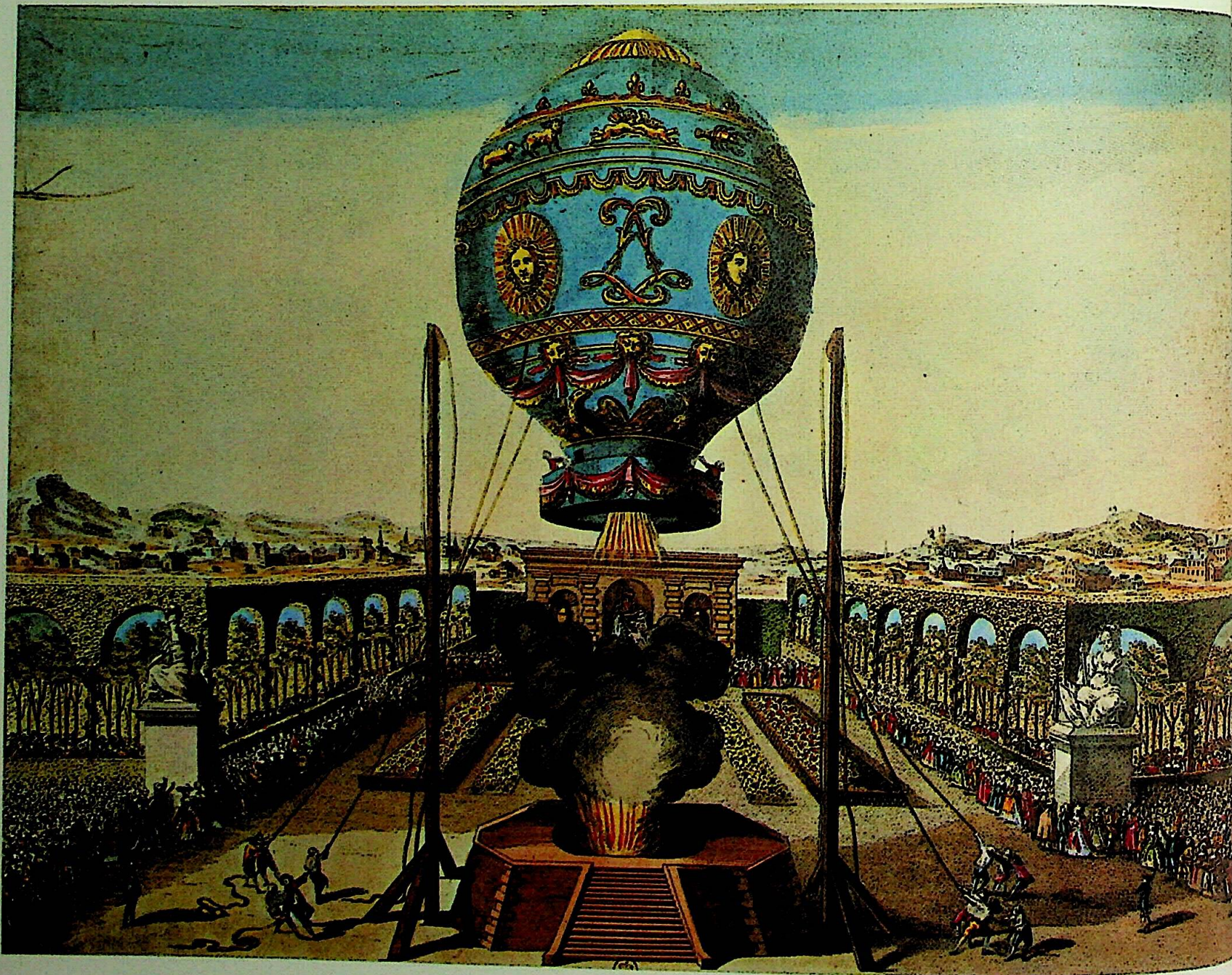
Considerable progress was also made in the natural sciences, though the Enlightenment was an age of solid advance rather than dramatic breakthrough. One example is the steady improvement of scientific instruments, which were essential to more exact and detailed research. Here it must suffice to mention the production of an accurate thermometer, to which the Swede Celsius, the Frenchman Réaumur and the Danziger Fahrenheit all contributed.

Analysis and classification were character-



*Below: the launching of the first Montgolfier balloon in the market-place at Annonay on 5 June 1783. The Montgolfier brothers, paper-manufacturers and amateur scientists of distinction, invented the fire-balloon: materials were burned beneath an opening in the balloon, heating the air within and causing the balloon to rise. The first manned flight was made on 21 November 1783 in a Montgolfier balloon. Engraving. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)*

*Below right: a marble bust of Voltaire done by the sculptor J. A. Houdon. (Collections de la Comédie Française, Paris.)*





istic activities of the Enlightenment scientist. In chemistry, the Englishman Henry Cavendish (1731–1810) isolated and described hydrogen, the Scotsman Joseph Black (1722–99) discovered carbon dioxide, and another Scot, Daniel Rutherford (1749–1819), discovered nitrogen. Towards the end of the period, Antoine Lavoisier (1743–94), a French aristocrat, laid the basis for the modern system of classification into elements and compounds.

Biology too had its great classifier: the Swede Linnaeus, whose *System of Nature* (1735) comprised some 12,000 living things, which were for the first time provided with precise names. The most influential work of the period, however, was Georges-Louis

Buffon's *Natural History* (1749–88), as much a work of literature as of science, which became one of the most popular books of the age. Buffon, unlike most scientists of the day, had difficulties with the authorities, who censured his observations on fossils, which he rightly believed to be older than the date established for the creation of the earth by Biblical studies.

Other scientists' works can only be noted here: in electricity, for example, Musschenbroek's Leyden jar (1746), Priestly's *History* (1767), Benjamin Franklin's experiments: in mathematics, Bernouilli, Euler, Lagrange. At the end of the period, the German-born English astronomer Sir William Herschel, also one of the great classifiers, made per-

haps the most spectacular discovery of the age when he observed an unknown planet, Uranus (1781).

## Impact of the Enlightenment

The Enlightenment created a climate of opinion in which 'the books that inspire benevolence are practically the only ones read' (Diderot). Pacifist sentiments began to be expressed among the educated classes; humanitarian feelings were manifested in disapproval of slavery, efforts to secure prison reform, and the growth of Freemasonry as a secular religion of humanity.

Yet the immediate social and political results were negligible. The philosophes themselves looked to those already in power to introduce institutional changes. They admired and corresponded with the 'enlightened despots' of central and eastern Europe, and in France they cultivated the ministers and even the mistresses of the king. Such tactics could at best achieve only limited results; but all other avenues of advance were closed. The great monarchies contained no party, group or class to whom the philosophes could appeal in programmatic terms, which is probably the main reason why they never attempted to formulate a common policy, and why not one of them produced a coherent political philosophy.

In the course of the century, however, Enlightenment attitudes did begin to appear outside the elite of court and salon. That is not to say that the works of the philosophes were read by the masses; but the diffusion of ideas, in a simplified and sometimes garbled form, can take place without popular acquaintance with primary sources. This was particularly true of France, but it could also be observed in most of western Europe before the French Revolution: and even as far away as Russia an intellectual minority was emerging that disapproved of despotism and serfdom.

The philosophes did not think, and had no grounds for thinking, in revolutionary terms. Their ideas were to be one of the elements that led to the French Revolution, but the Revolution was produced by a unique and perhaps improbable concatenation of circumstances and beliefs—the idealism generated by the American War of Independence, the quarrel between crown and nobility, the bankruptcy of the crown, etc.—which could not be foreseen in the mid-eighteenth century. Then, neither the resources nor the social structure of Europe were such as to promise rapid change.

## Eighteenth-century society

Eighteenth-century society was still overwhelmingly agricultural, despite the growth of cities and the development of an urban middle class in western Europe. On the eve of the Revolution in France, the land of the Enlightenment *par excellence*, some twenty-







two million out of a population of about twenty-six million were peasants. In central and eastern Europe the peasantry accounted for an even higher proportion of the population, towns were very small, and the only middle class of any importance was bureaucratic rather than mercantile. Only in Holland (properly called 'The United Provinces') had specific historical and geographical circumstances produced a mercantile society.

In the agrarian societies the dominant group was still the nobility. Nobles enjoyed great privileges, including tax exemptions and rights to payments and services from the peasantry; again, these tended to be very much greater in central and eastern Europe. They had a monopoly of the great offices of Church and state, even where (as in France) they wielded little collective political power.

There were wide differences in wealth and even status between nobles, since in most of Europe nobility was a matter of status—inherited by every child of a noble—rather

than possessions; with the result that many were no more than small farmers, and a few were paupers. But when all the differences are allowed for, the aristocratic character of eighteenth-century Europe is undeniable.

The mercantile middle class was becoming increasingly prosperous and powerful in western Europe, particularly in England and France; and it is doubtless significant that it was in these countries, with a relatively large number of educated men and a rapid growth of literacy, that the Enlightenment was brought to birth and widely diffused.

The basis of middle-class wealth was trade, not industry, though the unprecedented expansion of trade in the eighteenth century provided the source of raw materials, the markets and much of the capital that made the Industrial Revolution possible. Trade between Europe and the rest of the world expanded continuously, and as Dutch maritime strength slowly declined, a worldwide struggle began between France and England. Europe, North America, the West

Indies and India were the main theatres of a conflict that continued in one form or another until 1815. Eighteenth-century governments if anything overestimated the importance of commerce, and supported their merchants and colonists by subsidy and by force of arms. The wars of the period were not commercial wars, but commercial considerations powerfully influenced the way they were conducted. Hence the attention paid to the West Indies, the source of tobacco, sugar, coffee and dyestuffs. The Atlantic trade, of which the West Indies was the heart, brought prosperity to Liverpool, Bordeaux, Nantes and the other great ports of western Europe. Trade between European states, and with India, south-east Asia, the Mediterranean and the Levant, also expanded.

The commercial spirit touched life at many points. Commodities from overseas—tea, coffee, tobacco, muslins—changed European habits. Manufacturing areas in every mercantile nation became dependent





*The balloon was the most spectacular, though by no means the most important, invention of the eighteenth century. Left: the inhabitants of Gonesse evidently reacted with alarm and astonishment when confronted with the Montgolfier balloon that landed in their midst on 23 August 1783. Below: the safer hydrogen balloon was first manned by Robert and Charles, who made an ascent over Paris on 1 December 1783. Engravings. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)*



on the prosperity of international trade. Merchants formed pressure groups that no government could ignore, and the wealthiest had little difficulty in marrying their children into the nobility.

Important as these developments were, they did not constitute a social or economic revolution. The harvest, not the trade figures, decided the happiness of nations. The most rigorous economic blockade could not reduce a nation at war: a bad harvest caused it to starve in peacetime. The agencies of transformation—rapid industrial growth and technological advance—were found only in England, and only very late in the century.

One fact that did make for change was population growth, which was substantial and steady in France, Spain and Italy, and rapid (from about mid-century) in England, Ireland, the Low Countries, Scandinavia, Russia and parts of Germany. France remained the most populous country in Europe, with twenty-odd million inhabi-

tants, until late in the century: then she was overtaken by Russia, whose population reached thirty-six million by the end of Catherine II's reign (1796). In England and Wales the increase in population (just over five million in 1700: nine-and-a-half million in 1800) was of great importance in providing the labour force and the market needed for an industrial revolution.

The agricultural revolution and the first phase of the industrial revolution in Britain are outside the scope of this book. They laid the foundations for a new kind of society, in which agriculture yielded pride of place to industry, the country to the town, the craft workshop to the factory. Even in Britain the transformation was effected only in the nineteenth century. The societies discussed in this book remained hierarchical and rural until the nineteenth and, in some cases, the twentieth century.

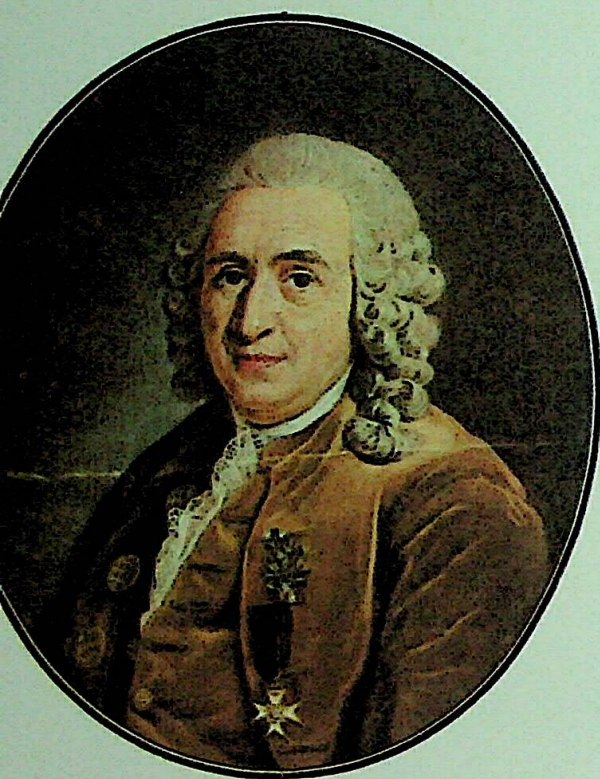
## New modes of feeling

The consciousness of European man was changing more quickly than material reality. By the seventeen-sixties a new sensibility, in some respects hostile to the values of the Enlightenment, was beginning to manifest itself.

As inheritors of that sensibility we find the men of the Enlightenment 'rational' to the point of aridity: rather superficial and complacent in their belief in reason as the answer to all problems, and lacking in warmth if not in light. This is partly an illusion created by the formal manners and polished conversation of the period: Voltaire, for example, fought intolerance and injustice with unmistakable passion. But it is also true that the philosophes were concerned with man as a social rather than an individual and unique being, and that their writings display almost exclusively what may be called *public* feelings.

In the second half of the eighteenth cen-





The study of nature became a science largely thanks to the efforts of two men: the Swede Linnaeus (Karl von Linné, above) and George-Louis Leclerc, comte de Buffon (far right). Engravings.

Right: the plates showing a mandrill and a seal are from the Collection des Animaux quadrupèdes de Buffon. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)

ture, the revulsion against reason, restraint and formality—already apparent somewhat earlier—became marked. The cult of sentiment, of spontaneous and passionate individual feeling, was the direct precursor of the Romantic movement, which is usually dated to the very late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Indeed, most of the characteristics of Romanticism—love of nature, childhood, the remote and mysterious past, the exotic, the wild and irregular—appeared in some form quite early in the eighteenth century.

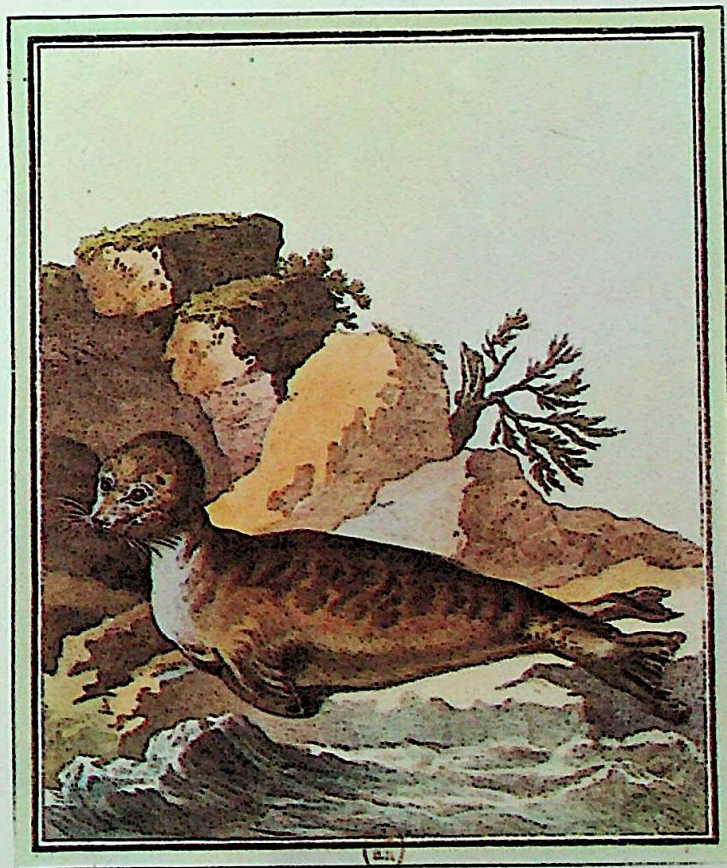
The new sensibility was expressed in many different ways. The English landscape garden replaced the formal French garden. A quasi-oriental style (*chinoiserie*) became the rage in furniture and interior decoration; Sir William Chambers built a pagoda at Kew. Ruins became collectors' items, and in 1747 the dilettante and letter-writer Horace Walpole—in many respects a typical figure of the Age of Reason—began to build himself a 'Gothick' house, Strawberry Hill. In painting, the graceful Rococo style of Watteau, Boucher and Fragonard gave way to Neo-Classicism, in part a response to the growing cult of sentimental republican virtue—another of the obsessions of the age, given impetus by excavations at Pompeii and Herculaneum, which provided a wealth of information about everyday life in antiquity. In the seventeen-sixties, Greuze's oversweet paintings of maidenly distress and domesticity were acclaimed in France, where the attractions of the simple life prompted Marie-Antoinette to play the shepherdess in her dairy at Rambouillet.

Literature provided the fullest expression of the new attitudes in all their complexity. Here only a few landmarks can be indicated. In France, Galland published a translation of *The Thousand and One Nights* (1704–17) which gave a fillip to the taste for the exotic. In England, Edward Young's *Night Thoughts* (1742–5) were filled with a satisfactorily gloomy introspection. Thomson's *The Seasons* (1726–30) with an exalted love of nature, and Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* (1764) with supernatural horror in a mysterious 'medieval' setting. Thomas Percy, the Bishop of Dromore, collected and published old English ballads in his *Reliques* (1765), and the European vogue for the supposed poems of the Gaelic bard Ossian (in fact the work of their 'discoverer', James Macpherson) was such that they survived Dr Johnson's denunciations and were still being declaimed by Napoleon at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Many of the extravagances of this 'pre-Romantic' period were somewhat tongue-in-cheek, or were at least not felt profoundly enough to impinge on social mores. Horace Walpole lived in a quaint house and wrote a thriller; but his behaviour remained that of a cultivated English gentleman. That is not to say that fads and fashions are arbitrary: in this period they indicate (among other











things) a certain restlessness and dissatisfaction with the ordinary course of social life. But the dissatisfaction remained on the fringe of consciousness, not at its centre: it appeared in night thoughts rather than daylight actions.

The seventeen-seventies witnessed the brief emergence of the German 'Storm and Stress' writers, who displayed in their own lives an agonising inability to adjust to everyday realities that was to be one of the characteristics of full-blown Romanticism. Paradoxically, it was the most balanced—and by far the greatest—of the school. Johann Wolfgang Goethe (1749–1832), whose work had the most 'Romantic' impact: the suicide of the hero in *Young Werther* (1774) was imitated by many young men who fancied that they were profoundly introspective as well as unsuccessful in love.

### The cult of the heart

Much more characteristic of the period, and probably much more deeply felt, was 'the cult of the heart'—of spontaneity, sincerity,

love, sentimental virtue. Its special feature was that sincerity rather than actions increasingly became the criterion of virtue: hypocrisy became the worst of vices. In England, the heartless rake of Restoration comedy gave way to the likeable scamps of Fielding, Sheridan and Goldsmith. The new heroes got into scrapes hardly better than those of the rakes, but were always saved by their transparent good nature.

A more religious morality was upheld by Samuel Richardson, whose multi-volume epistolary novels set all Europe weeping. *Pamela* (1740–1) and *Clarissa Harlowe* (1747–8), with their portraits of maidenly virtue under assault and protracted death-bed scenes, let loose a flood of sentimental novels, of which the most important was *The New Heloise* by Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

### Society and the noble savage

Rousseau (1712–78) wrote few works, but every one made a profound impression on his own and following generations. He was the son of a clockmaker in Geneva, a city

with powerful traditions of puritanism and independence, and both his social origin and place of birth influenced the attitudes of his maturity. So must his youthful experiences as a timid hanger-on, always on the fringes of good society.

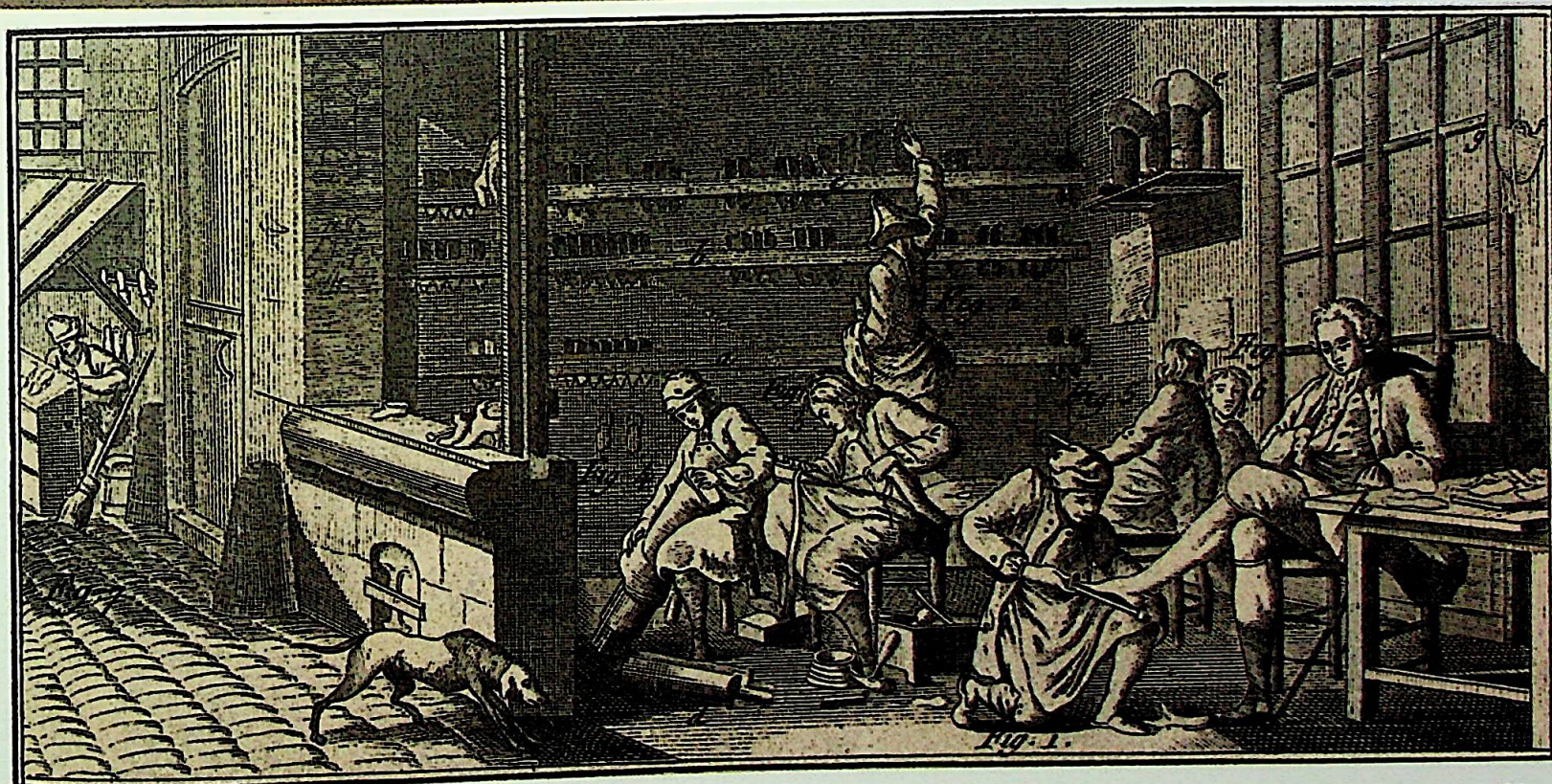
Unlike the philosophes, Rousseau regarded the very existence of society as objectionable: it was not badly constituted, but bad in any form. In his first published work, the *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences* (1750), he argues that progress and society have corrupted man; that in his natural state man is virtuous and happy. Though he never used the phrase 'the noble savage', Rousseau is rightly associated with the idea behind the words; for it was largely the extraordinary eloquence of his prose that made the idea of unspoiled primitive man (already something of a literary commonplace) into a potent myth.

*The New Heloise* (1761) was probably the most popular novel of the century, running to scores of editions. Like *Clarissa Harlowe*, it is written as a series of letters, and now seems intolerably long and diffuse; but

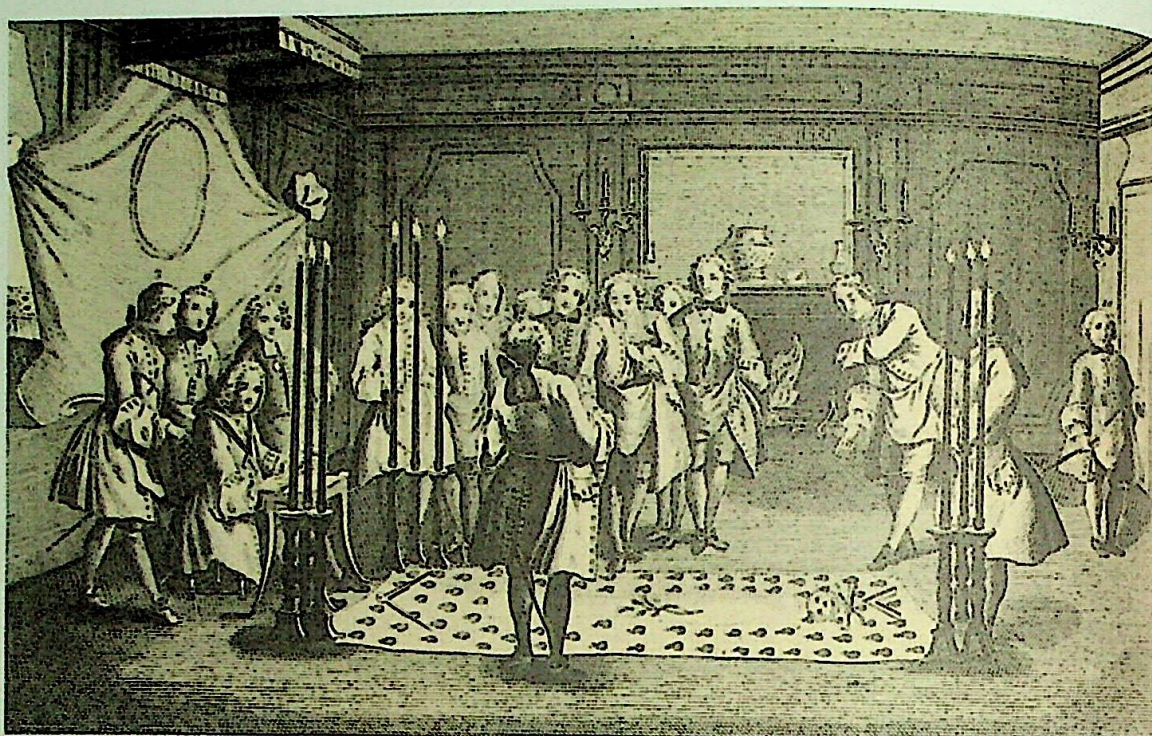




Left: underwater divers recovering sunken objects.  
 Below: Parisian shoemaker's shop.  
 Engravings from the Encyclopaedia.  
 Far left: an experiment in 'animal magnetism' performed in a salon. In the seventeen-eighties this was the vogue in Paris, where Franz Anton Mesmer was effecting cures by hypnotism; he and his followers believed that he employed a healing magnetic force which passed from body to body. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)







eighteenth-century readers were enchanted by extended descriptions of the struggle between passion and duty, and by Rousseau's enthusiasm for nature, simplicity and children.

In *Emile* (1762), a tract on education thinly disguised as a novel, Rousseau takes the same line: the child Emile must be shielded from contact with society. Rousseau recognised that children were not miniature adults, and that their capacities and needs differed at each stage of development. He insisted that the child must learn only what and when he needs to learn; and that direct sensory experience was at least as important as learning from books. These doctrines were taken up enthusiastically, since the eighteenth century was one of growing emphasis on family life and the role of parents—not tutors or servants—in bringing up children.

The message of *The Social Contract* (1762), one of the most influential books ever written, is that the only legitimate foundation for political authority is 'the general will', not inheritance or force. The mainly passive and heavily qualified conception of popular authority put forward by Locke was now expressed in active terms. Rousseau understood that majority decisions might not be in the general interest (which is in fact one of the problems of democratic theory), and some of his specu-

lations can be regarded as justifying dictatorship by a minority representing the 'true' will of the people. But despite its confusions and ambiguities, the central idea of *The Social Contract* is unmistakably that of government not only in the interests of the people—which an enlightened despot claimed to provide—but government directly answerable to their will.

Rousseau's posthumously published *Confessions* began the whole modern tradition of confessional literature. Here he attempted to tell the whole truth about himself, including his social failures, low actions and sexual peculiarities; unintentionally he also chronicled his growing persecution mania, which led him to believe that his friends and acquaintances were part of a vast conspiracy against him. The *Confessions* exhibit in its least attractive light Rousseau's assumption that sincerity excuses everything; but they also comprise a wonderful self-portrait, opening up a wide avenue by which man's knowledge of himself could be increased.

### Reason, sentiment, revolution

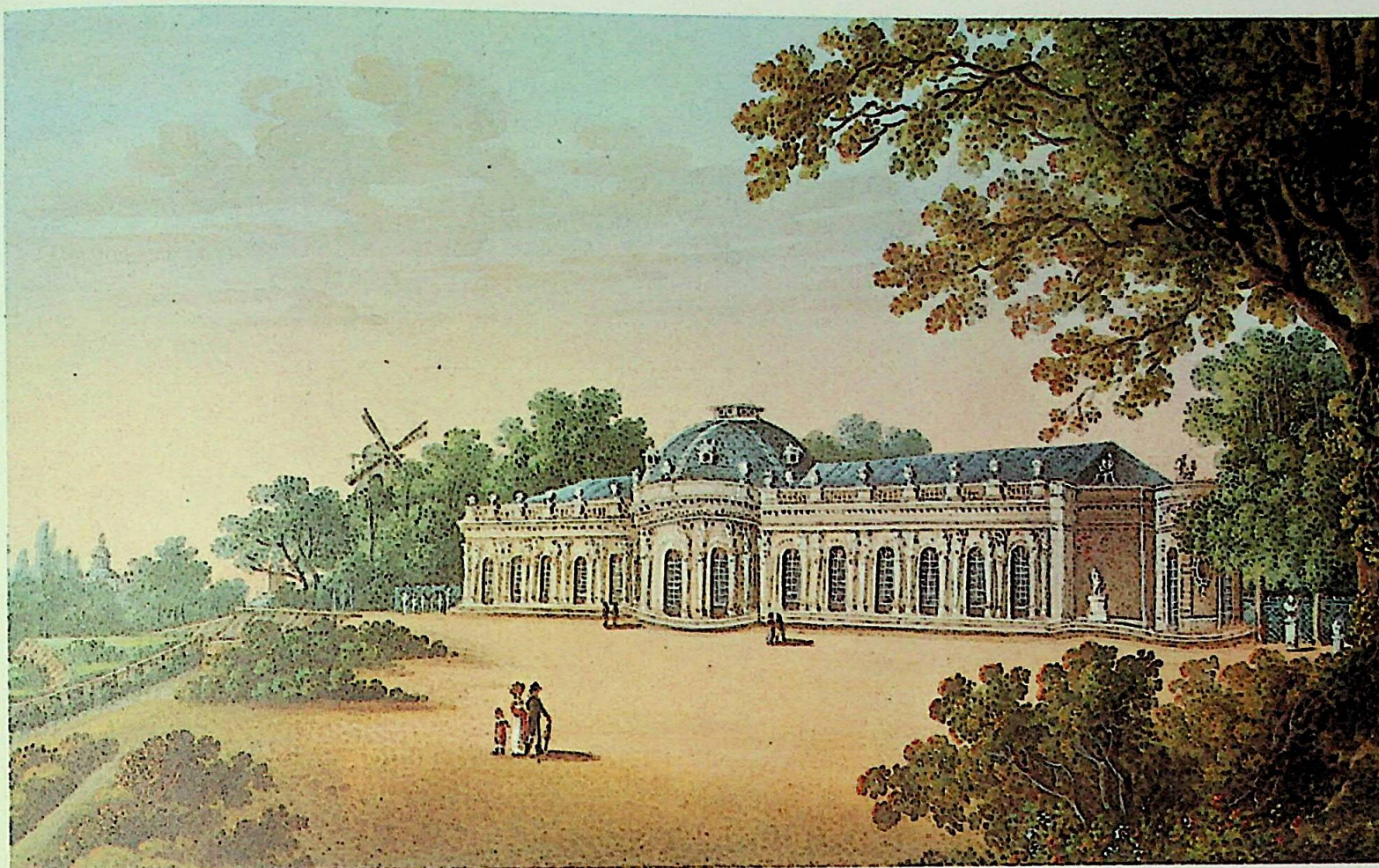
The relationship between the rationalism of the Enlightenment and the new modes of feeling is complex and obscure. In some respects they were complementary: the attack on accepted beliefs and institutions, above all the attack on institutional religion, was

certainly instrumental in the development of a new sense of individual uniqueness and new emotions towards man, society and nature. Even those who were consciously hostile to the philosophes absorbed much of their teaching: when Rousseau rejected the legitimacy of authority based on inheritance or prescriptive right, he was adopting the central position of the Enlightenment.

It would nevertheless be wrong to ignore the element of deliberate reaction against the Enlightenment in these emotions, especially since it became more prominent in the nineteenth century. In the immediate future, however, all the main currents of eighteenth-century thought and feeling were to mingle in the French Revolution, that amazing phenomenon which was at once rational, romantic, individualistic, utopian, and severely practical.

*Above left: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, greatest of the writers who stressed the supremacy of the emotions. Eighteenth-century bust; French school. (Musée Carnavalet, Paris.) Above: the ritual of Freemasonry satisfied the emotional and mystical side of many humanitarians and rationalists: it had the double aspect of a 'religion of humanity' and a secret society. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)*





# The Age of Enlightened Despots

*Emergence of Prussia; Frederick II—precarious greatness; Maria Theresa as enlightened despot; radical reforms of Joseph II; conciliation and the end of reforms in Austria; Russia replaces Sweden as the northern power; three partitions of Poland; Ottoman Empire—stagnation and political instability.*

## The enlightened despots

During the eighteenth century, very considerable changes were introduced from above in the monarchies of central, southern and eastern Europe. The rational-humanitarian aspect of the changes, and the fact that they were conceived and executed by monarchs or their chosen ministers (and not in response to public opinion) has made it natural to call this phenomenon 'enlightened despotism'. The image thus created, of the philosopher enthroned, was precisely that achieved by the sedulous self-advertisement of Frederick II of Prussia and Catherine II of Russia, the most glamorous rulers of the age.

In fact, 'enlightened despotism' was essentially the eighteenth-century phase of a more extended process: the development of the modern state, served by a large

bureaucracy, able to make heavy demands on the energies and resources of all citizens, and intolerant of rival authorities. In this sense, eighteenth-century monarchs were imitators of French absolutism, concerned with the rationalisation of functions, centralisation, and the destruction of class, regional and clerical privileges. Extensions of government activity and the increasing cost of waging war necessitated a larger revenue: and that in turn necessitated more civil servants, revision of the tax structure, and measures to encourage agriculture, industry and trade.

## Despotism and the Enlightenment

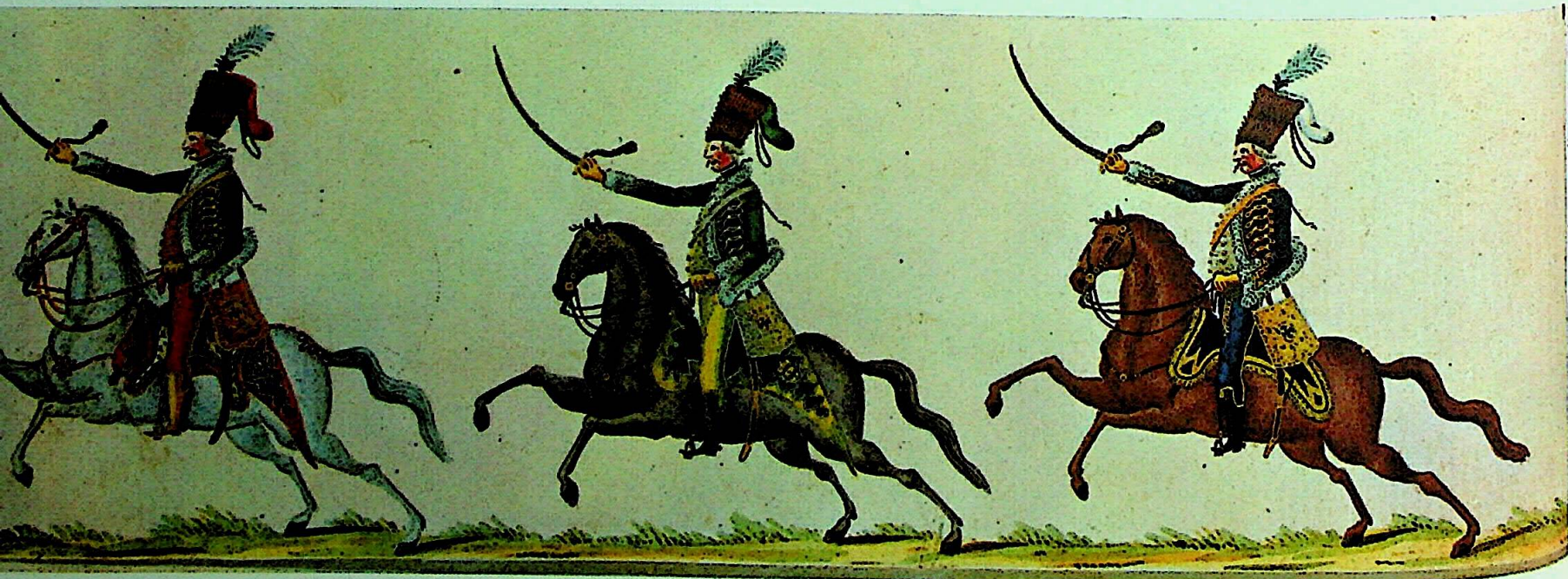
But 'enlightened' is not an inappropriate description of this eighteenth-century phase of the process. Being well-informed and

*Above: Sans-Souci (literally 'carefree'), built by George Wenzel von Knobelsdorff (1699–1753) for Frederick the Great. Here, with a few chosen friends, Frederick could display his talents as a conversationalist and man of letters. (Print Room, Dahlem, West Berlin.)*





Right: Frederick William I; a lady of his court (above). Paintings by Antoine Pesne. (Charlottenburg Schloss, West Berlin.)





well-educated, monarchs and ministers could not avoid being influenced by the Enlightenment, and many characteristic measures of the period—freedom of speech and writing (albeit limited), abolition of judicial torture, codification of laws, various degrees of religious toleration—can scarcely be dismissed as acts purely in the interest of the state. Many extensions of state activity were in any case welcomed by the philosophes. They too hoped to see the wealth of nations increase, and disliked privilege and clerical power, though their motives were different from those of the monarchs they admired.

Within the general pattern of 'enlightened despotism' there were numerous deviations and permutations. Frederick William I of Prussia greatly strengthened the state without being influenced by the Enlightenment. Catherine II proclaimed her 'enlightened' convictions but failed to translate them into action. Frederick II acquired religious scepticism from Voltaire, called himself the first servant of the state—and upheld aristocratic privilege in every sphere. The Portuguese statesman, Pombal, freed the Indian slaves in Brazil but retained prohibitions on the works of the philosophes. It was, paradoxically, Austria—usually thought of as a highly conservative state—that produced the very type of the enlightened despot in Joseph II.

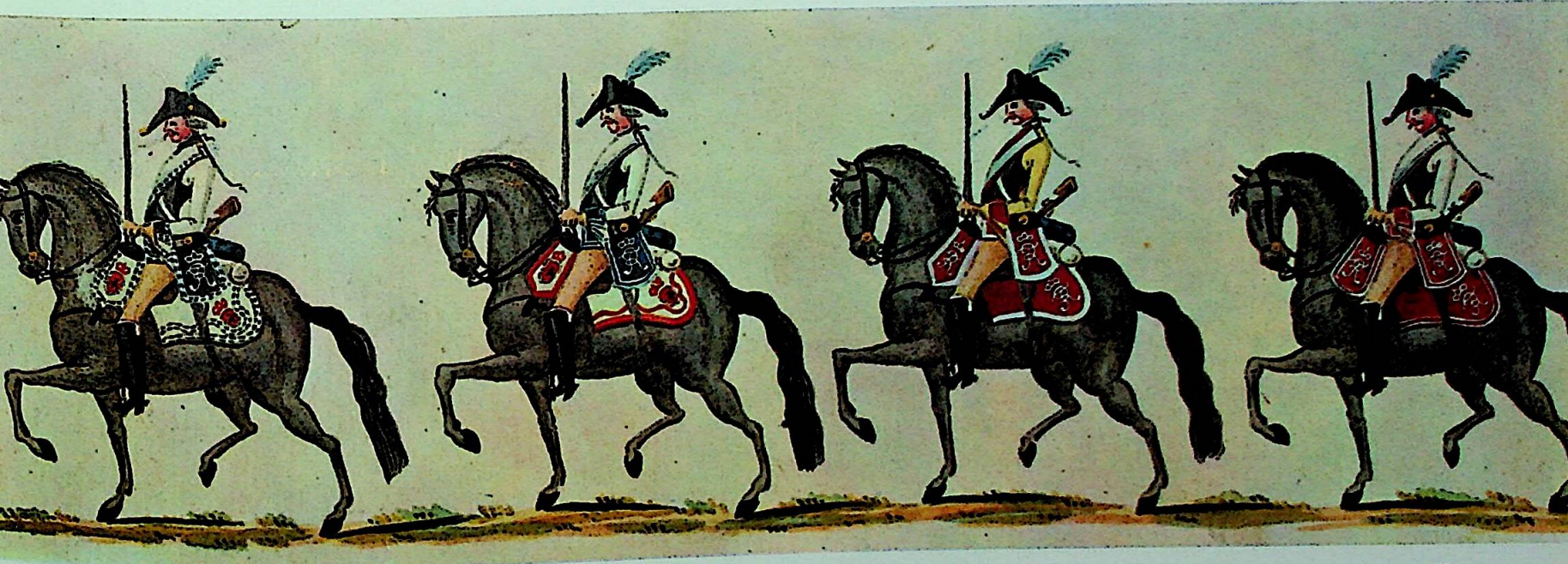
### The limits of despotism

Enlightened despotism was confined to 'backward' Europe: the great mercantile states (Britain, France, Holland) were un-

affected. The absence of a powerful middle-class in central, southern and eastern Europe made the monarchy the initiator of change; but it also deprived monarchs of the effective support with which they might have curtailed noble privileges. As a result, the monarchy was in the last analysis dependent on noble support: and the price of that support was the perpetuation of privilege.

For despite the developments which have been described, the pre-industrial state had only limited instruments of control: there was no possibility of a state apparatus holding down a country without at least the acquiescence of the wealthy and socially powerful classes. 'Despots' and 'absolute' rulers could introduce only limited changes, though their limitations would seem less marked had the age of enlightened despots not been succeeded by the age of political and industrial revolutions.

*Right: Frederick William's daughter, Sophia, and her husband. Painting by Antoine Pesne. (Charlottenburg Schloss, West Berlin.) Below: Cuirassiers and hussars of Frederick the Great's army. (Print Room, Dahlem, West Berlin.)*





## The idea of 'the state'

The personal qualities of a ruler were still decisive: the most highly developed bureaucracies remained geared to personal control by monarch or minister. If a ruler was feeble, or entrusted the government to incompetents, the state stagnated or declined.

Nevertheless, in the eighteenth century, perhaps because administration was bureaucratized, the conception of monarchical government tended to become more impersonal. Kings increasingly thought in terms of state interests rather than family interests, and identified themselves with the state rather than vice versa. On the other hand, when Frederick II (the Great) or Joseph II spoke of themselves as servants of the state, they meant the state and not the people: they remained very much masters of men. The idea of 'the state'—an abstraction for which any sacrifice could be demanded—came into existence even before technology and communications made its power all-embracing.

## Challenge to 'despotism'

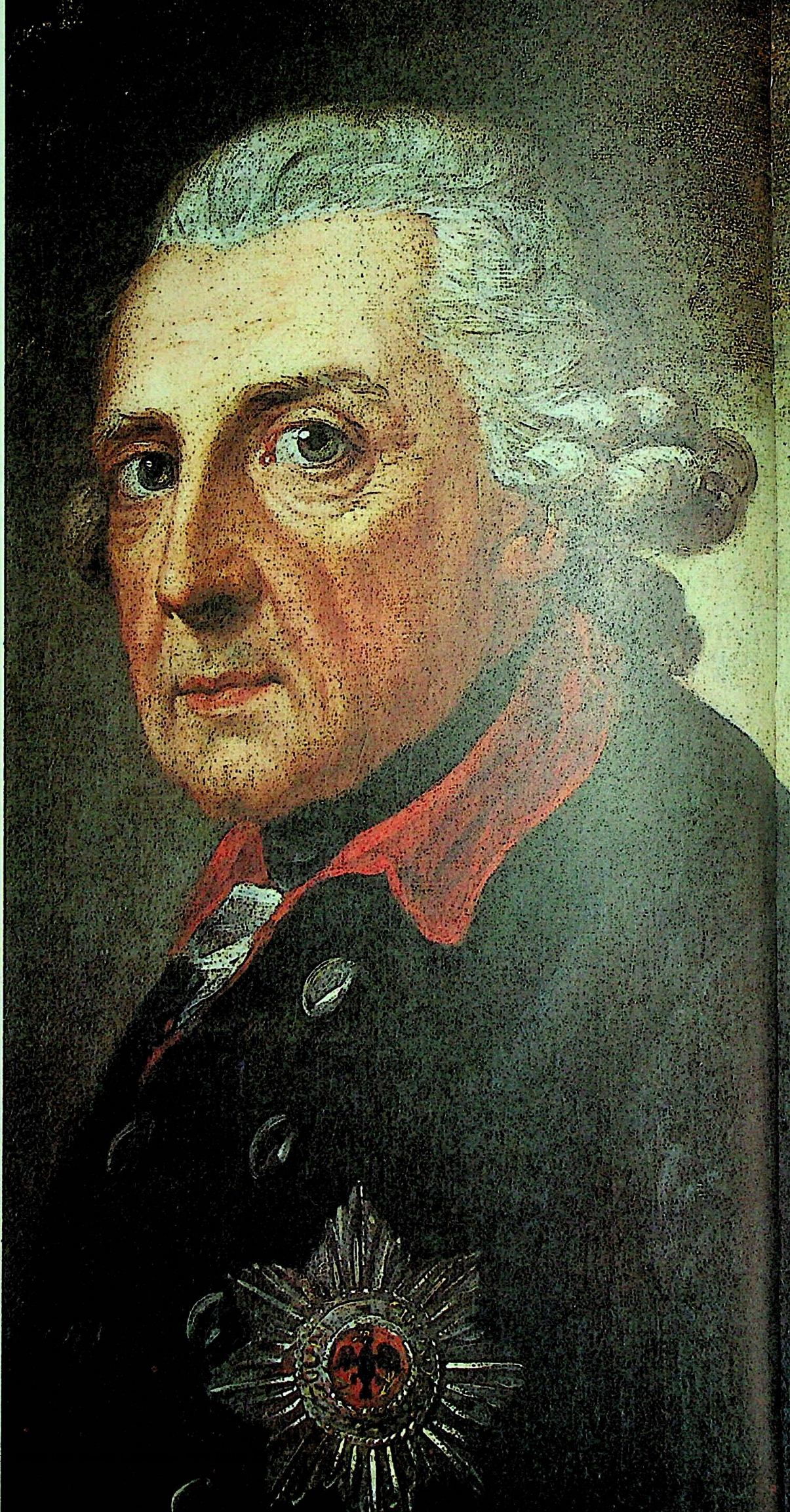
If the king was becoming the state's servant, he showed no sign of becoming redundant. The eighteenth-century conviction that a strong monarchy was the best form of government seemed to be supported by experience: republics like Holland and Venice were declining, and the elective monarchies of the Empire and Poland were clearly incapable of governing effectively; only the constitutional monarchy of Britain provided a partial exception.

For most of the period, representative institutions were regarded as medieval anachronisms—obstacles to the unity and effectiveness of the state. The only enlightened despot to display any interest in representative institutions was Leopold of Tuscany (Leopold II of Austria) in the late pre-Revolutionary period, when the cult of Roman republicanism, the teachings of Rousseau and the practical success of the American Revolution had begun a revival of interest in representative government.

The French Revolution ended any possibility—at best only a possibility—that enlightened despots might collaborate with this new force. Instead, monarchs were frightened into alliance with the nobility and the Church, and enlightened despotism passed into reaction pure and simple.

## The 'drill-sergeant' king

Frederick William I of Prussia was far from the conventional idea of an enlightened despot. He was pious, uncultivated and subject to terrible rages in which he thrashed anyone within reach. Yet he gave the Prussian state a unique character, leaving his successor the means with which to make Prussia a power in Europe.







Two aspects of Frederick the Great. In the painting (far left) by Anton Craff he is the careworn ruler; there is no hint of his iron resolution or his ruthlessness.

(Charlottenburg Schloss, West Berlin.)  
Left: the painting by Adolf Menzel shows Frederick in an elegant Rococo setting, relaxing at the famous round table at Sans-Souci. Its roundness ensured perfect equality, since no questions of precedence in seating could arise. Voltaire is seated at Frederick's right. (National-Galerie, East Berlin.)

The army was the king's ruling passion. He hired or kidnapped men over six feet tall from all over Europe for his famous 'regiment of giants' at Potsdam. More significant was the increased size of the army, which by Frederick William's death comprised some 83,000 men, making it the fourth largest in Europe. It was supported by what was in fact one of the lesser European states in both population (about two-and-a-half million in 1740) and economic resources.

Like most European armies, it consisted of pressed men or mercenaries, many of them foreigners. Savage discipline and endless drills and reviews transformed it into an efficient fighting force but did not prevent large-scale desertion. It was to remedy this that in 1733 Frederick William assigned to each regiment a Prussian district ('canton')

which was obliged to make up the regiment's numbers. Foreigners continued to be recruited in large numbers—even under Frederick the Great about a third of the total strength of the army was foreign-born—but the basis of a national fighting force had been created.

By providing peasant soldiers, the cantonal system speeded the transformation of the Junker class into a military service nobility. The king himself set an example by always wearing uniform. He created a cadet corps in Berlin for the sons of Junkers; membership became a much sought-after privilege that reinforced the attractions of a military career. The officer corps became the virtual monopoly of the nobility, and by 1740 the fractious Junkers, only half-tamed by the Great Elector, were devoted servants of the crown.

## Royal and bureaucratic control

The other features of Frederick William's reign were bureaucratic control over the state and royal control over the bureaucracy. In 1723 the collection of taxes and crown revenues was concentrated in a new institution, the General Directory, which also supervised all the activities of provincial authorities through local committees. In the towns, elected local officials were replaced by salaried state officials. Bureaucratic control, originating in the need to raise large sums to support the army, became all-pervasive.

Royal control was maintained by a system unique to Prussia. Most rulers took decisions in council; Frederick William took them in his 'cabinet', alone with his secretaries, on the basis of reports submitted



severally by his ministers. To avoid the concentration of power in the hands of any single official, the specialised 'colleges' into which the administration was divided never had a single head.

The main concern of king and bureaucrats alike was to increase revenue, most of which (about three-quarters) was used for the upkeep of the army. Frederick William made strenuous efforts to collect every sum that could possibly be interpreted as his due. He reformed the leasing arrangements for properties on the royal estates, on which about a third of the Prussian peasantry lived, and practised rigid economy. The measure of his success is that the income of the crown more than doubled during his reign.

Trade and industry continued to be strictly regulated, and immigration was encouraged by every possible means. Refugees arrived from France and Salzburg (from which Protestants were expelled in 1732), and many foreign recruits who joined the Prussian army settled in the Hohenzollern lands when they retired.

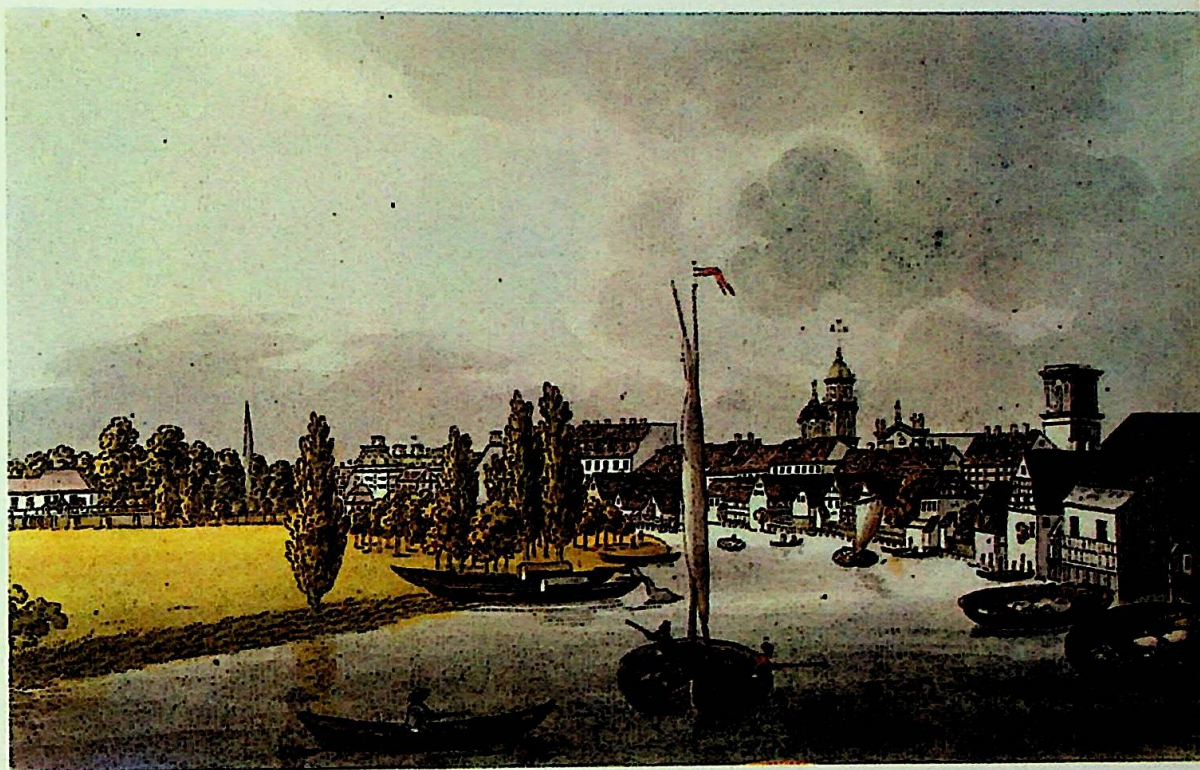
## The military state

Despite Frederick William's idiosyncracies, the state that he created displayed many essential characteristics of an enlightened despotism. The functions and powers of the bureaucracy grew: intermediate authorities—elected urban officials, guilds—were destroyed or emasculated; tradition was overridden in the interests of efficiency. But the Hohenzollern state also possessed unique features which derived from the maintenance of a disproportionately large army. Troops were billeted on the civilian population, and much local trade was concerned with supplying their needs: prices were fixed and enforced by garrison commanders; soldiers received a rudimentary education and staffed the lower grades of the civil service. Close government supervision accustomed the citizen to obey soldiers, or authorities that were military in origin or style: respect for the landlord blended with respect for the officer. Other states, it has been said, possessed armies; only the Prussian army possessed a state.

*The development of towns during Frederick II's reign was a feature that distinguished Prussia from most of Germany. However, even Berlin remained very rural in appearance when compared with the cities of western Europe. The Orphan's Home (above). Boats going through the Customs at Potsdam (far right). The market in front of the Church of St Gertrude (below). (Print Room, Dahlem, West Berlin.)*







Frederick William accumulated troops and treasure, but he made little use of them. The solitary Prussian acquisition during his reign was part of western Pomerania, with the port of Stettin (1720), a reward for helping to end the Great Northern War. Because of Frederick William's diplomatic ineptitude, Prussian influence in Europe was negligible—in the event, no great misfortune, since the wars and diplomacy of the period were singularly wasteful and inconclusive. It was Frederick William's successor who revealed Prussian might to an astounded Europe.

### The philosopher prince

Frederick II (1740–86) had a troubled adolescence and young manhood. His addiction to the flute, books and elegant conversation enraged Frederick William, and relations between father and son reached breaking-point in 1730, when the eighteen-year-old Frederick decided to flee abroad.

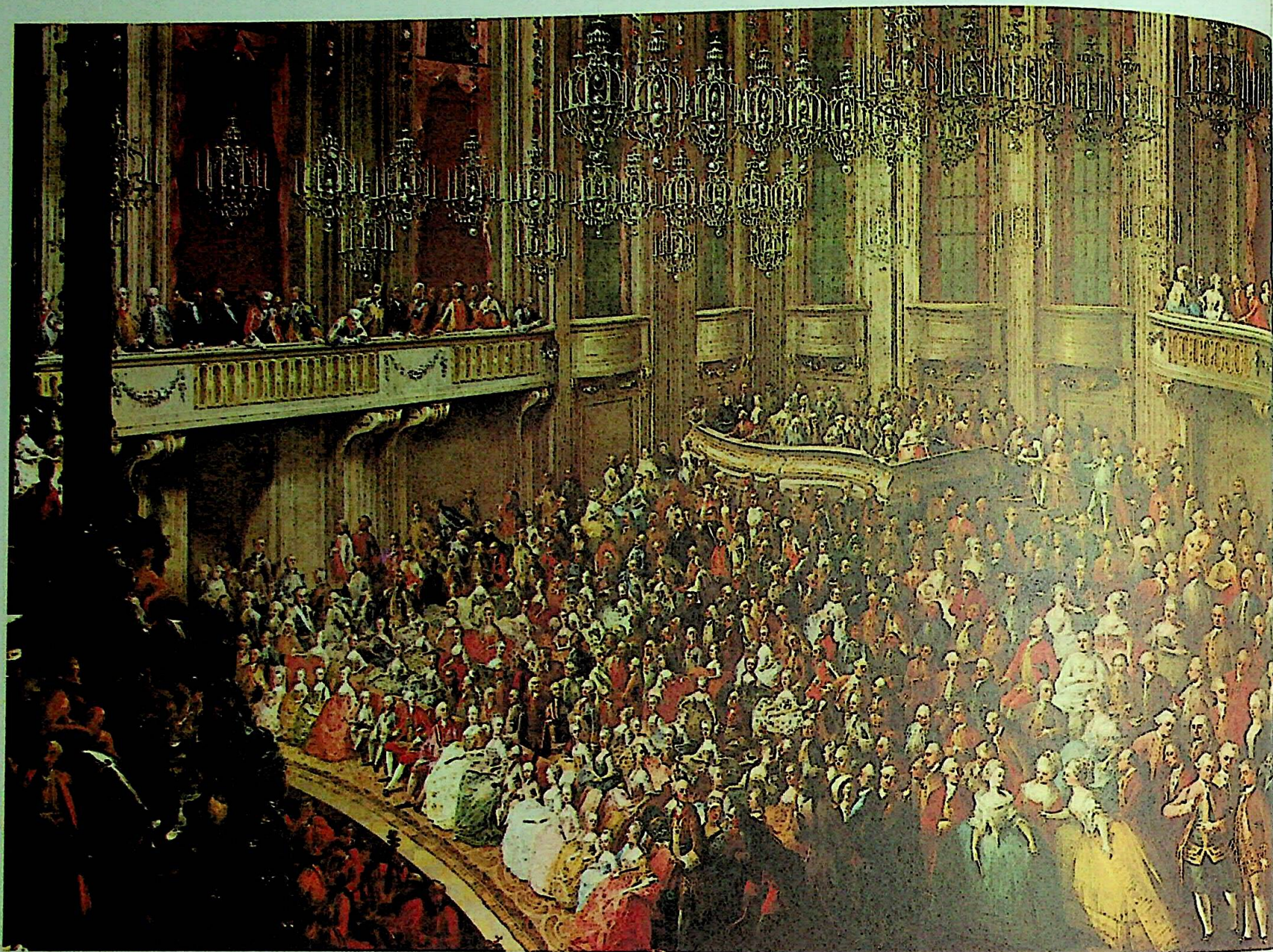
His plan was discovered, he was imprisoned and forced to witness the execution

of his confidant, Katte; and for a time his own life seemed in danger. In fact, he was kept under supervision while he performed routine administrative and military duties—an invaluable apprenticeship despite its punitive aspect. The incident was a valuable lesson in patience and self-control; henceforward Frederick obeyed his father without question.

Neither now nor later did he abandon his cultural pursuits. He was a skilful flautist, a competent composer, read voraciously, and poured out odes, tragedies, prose arguments and, in later life, histories and memoirs. All his literary works were written in French: he thoroughly despised German, which he wrote abominably. When his father allowed him more freedom, Frederick gathered about him a company of wits and scholars: while his correspondence with Voltaire provided Frederick with good literary advice, and both correspondents with opportunities for relentless mutual flattery.

Those who expected Frederick to be a peaceable philosopher-king had mistaken his character. He absorbed the rationalism





of the Enlightenment rather than its humanitarian idealism. As early as 1731 he was discussing the expansion of Prussia without reference to legality or diplomatic fictions. He regarded himself as the first servant of the state: but Frederick's state was an abstraction with strategic necessities and appetites: it was by no means synonymous with 'the people', whose welfare could in fact be sacrificed to its interests. If it did not originate with Frederick, this impersonal conception of the state was first consciously formulated by him.

### A new Machiavelli

Frederick's first acts as king displayed his allegiance to the Enlightenment: judicial torture was abolished, censorship of the press ended, and religious toleration proclaimed. The difference between Frederick's conception of kingship and his predecessors' was clearly shown in the deforestation of royal hunting-grounds for agriculture: the state came before royal pleasures.

Meanwhile, Voltaire hurried the king's *Anti-Machiavel* through the press, believing that Frederick might now prefer to suppress his criticisms of the great analyst of political ruthlessness. Events proved Voltaire right: Frederick's first major act of policy was to attack Austria without provocation.

The Austrian emperor, Charles VI, had been succeeded by his daughter, Maria Theresa. The disputed succession of a woman gave Frederick his opportunity: at the end of 1740, with 40,000 Prussian troops, he marched into Silesia, confident that although the powers (including Prussia) had formally accepted Maria Theresa's accession, their greed would soon lead them to follow his example.

Frederick's calculations proved correct: his action began the War of Austrian Succession (1740–8). Prussia's part in it was limited to two relatively brief struggles against Austria (1740–2 and 1744–5), generally known as the First and Second Silesian Wars. Prussian victories astonished Europe, and made it clear that she had joined the

ranks of the great powers. Many of these victories—Chotusitz, Hohenfriedberg, Soor—were gained under Frederick's command, and even before the end of the war he had begun to be called 'Frederick the Great'. At its end, all the powers recognised Prussia's acquisition of Silesia.

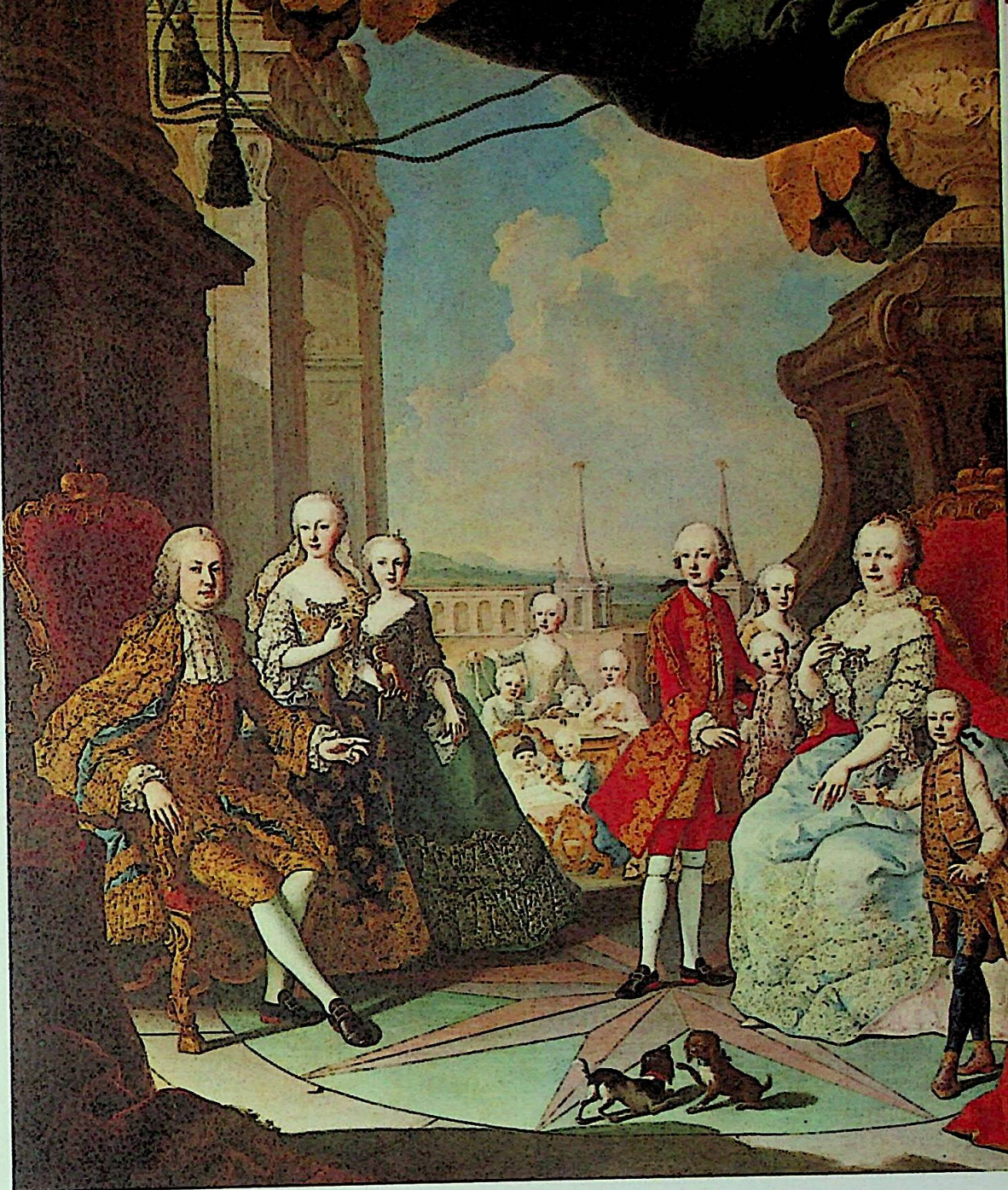
Silesia was a wealthy and populous province, with a thriving woollen industry and deposits of iron, coal and lead that were invaluable to a militaristic state. It is indicative of the limited aims (and means) of eighteenth-century rulers that this single acquisition was to be at risk for most of Frederick's reign.

This was in part a result of Frederick's methods. His wartime diplomacy—ceasing to fight when his French allies seemed about to overwhelm Austria, taking up arms when Austria grew too strong—had been successful: but they left him friendless. Maria Theresa burned to recover Silesia; Russia coveted East Prussia; and France, formally still Prussia's ally, no longer trusted Frederick.



*Right: Maria Theresa with her husband, Francis of Lorraine, and their children, on the balcony at Schönbrunn. Painted in about 1752 by Martin van Meytens. Left: members of the imperial family attending a concert. (Schönbrunn Schloss; property of the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.)*

*Below, right: Maria Theresa, Francis and their eldest son, Joseph. Anonymous painting. (Heeresgeschichtliches Museum, Vienna.)*



## The Seven Years War

Frederick was aware of his isolation: after the Second Silesian War he declared that henceforth he 'would not disturb a cat'. However, eight years of uneasy peace revealed Frederick's weaknesses as a diplomatist: a tendency to credit others with his own rationality and subtlety, and a temperamental bias towards 'action'. In January 1756, alarmed by an Anglo-Russian rapprochement, Frederick signed the Convention of Westminster with Britain—which simply convinced France that she should accept Austrian offers of a defensive alliance. Believing that he was about to be crushed by a Franco-Russo-Austrian coalition, Frederick decided to move first.

In August 1756 he attacked Saxony, a strategically important state because its borders were only a few miles from Berlin. The Saxon army was defeated and incorporated into Frederick's forces, and the resources of Saxony harnessed to Prussia's needs. In return for these advantages

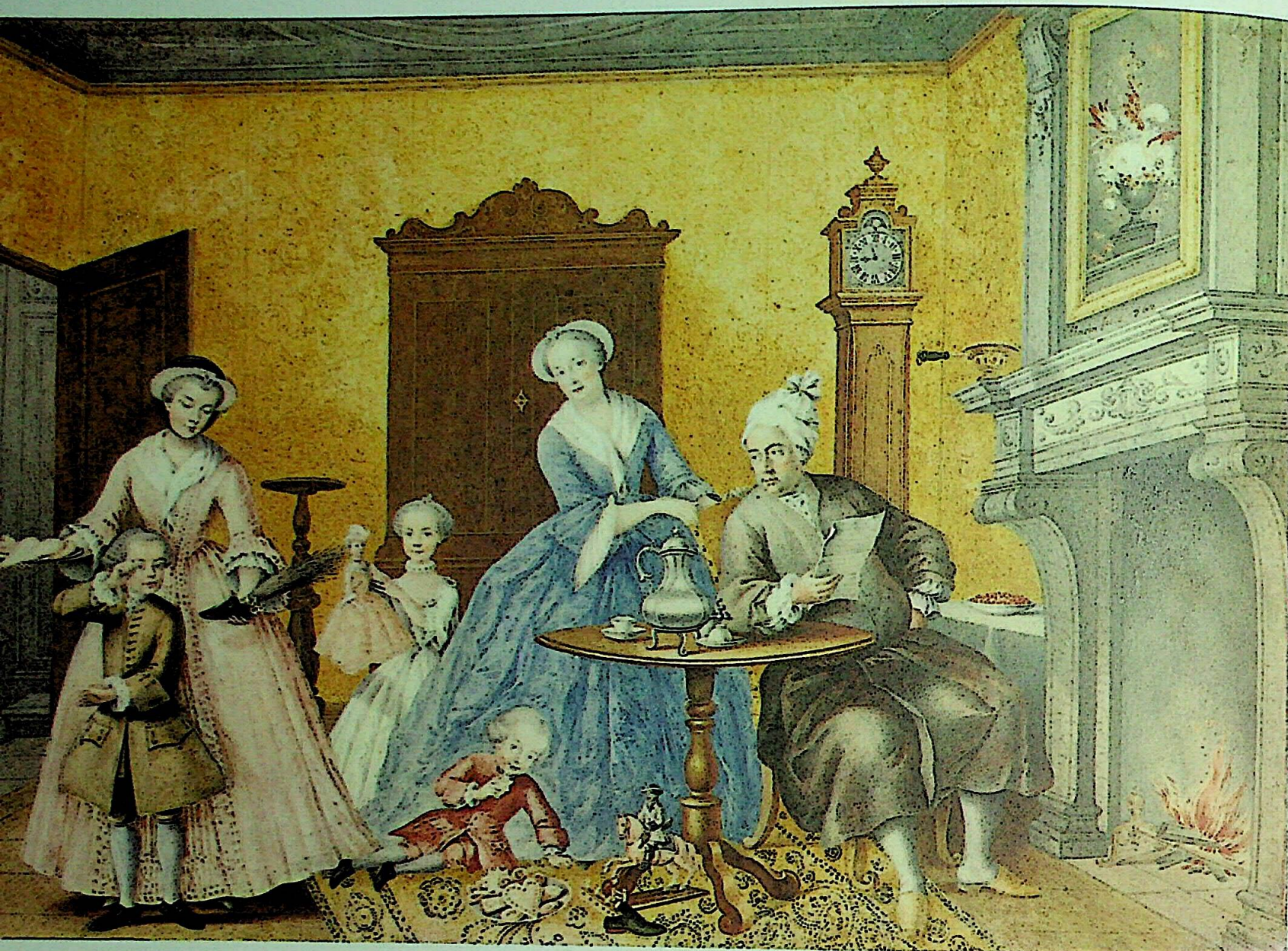
Frederick had precipitated war with Russia and Austria, and—by attacking instead of waiting to be attacked—ensured that France would join them. Sweden also declared war, and Frederick found himself encircled by enemies determined to dismember his kingdom.

For Prussia, the Seven Years War was a struggle for survival only. Frederick's sole ally was Britain, which paid him yearly subsidies and maintained an army in western Germany. Despite brilliant victories—at Rossbach (1757) over a Franco-German army, at Leuthen (1757) over the Austrians, at Zondorf (1758) over the Russians—the coalition drove Frederick's armies back by sheer weight of numbers. Against this, victories brought only temporary relief; and there were as many defeats as victories. The king was tireless and endlessly resourceful, and his army had the advantages of interior lines and unity of command; but the situation several times reached a point at which Frederick contemplated suicide.

From 1760 the war was mainly one of







*The private lives of the Habsburgs: two drawings by the Archduchess Maria Christina, who has written 'Maria fecit 1762' on the mantelpiece in each drawing. Left: Maria Theresa and Francis giving Christmas presents to three of their younger children. The older of the two boys has evidently been naughty: he has only received a shoe filled with switches. The little girl is Marie Antoinette.*

*Right: Maria Theresa's son, Joseph, at his wife's bedside. (Schönbrunn Schloss; property of the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.)*

attrition, siege following siege, while both sides became increasingly war-weary. The coalition began to break up—possibly saving Frederick from ultimate defeat—with the succession of Frederick's fanatical admirer, Peter III, as tsar of Russia. When peace was made in 1763, Prussia—including Silesia—remained intact.

### Prussia under Frederick

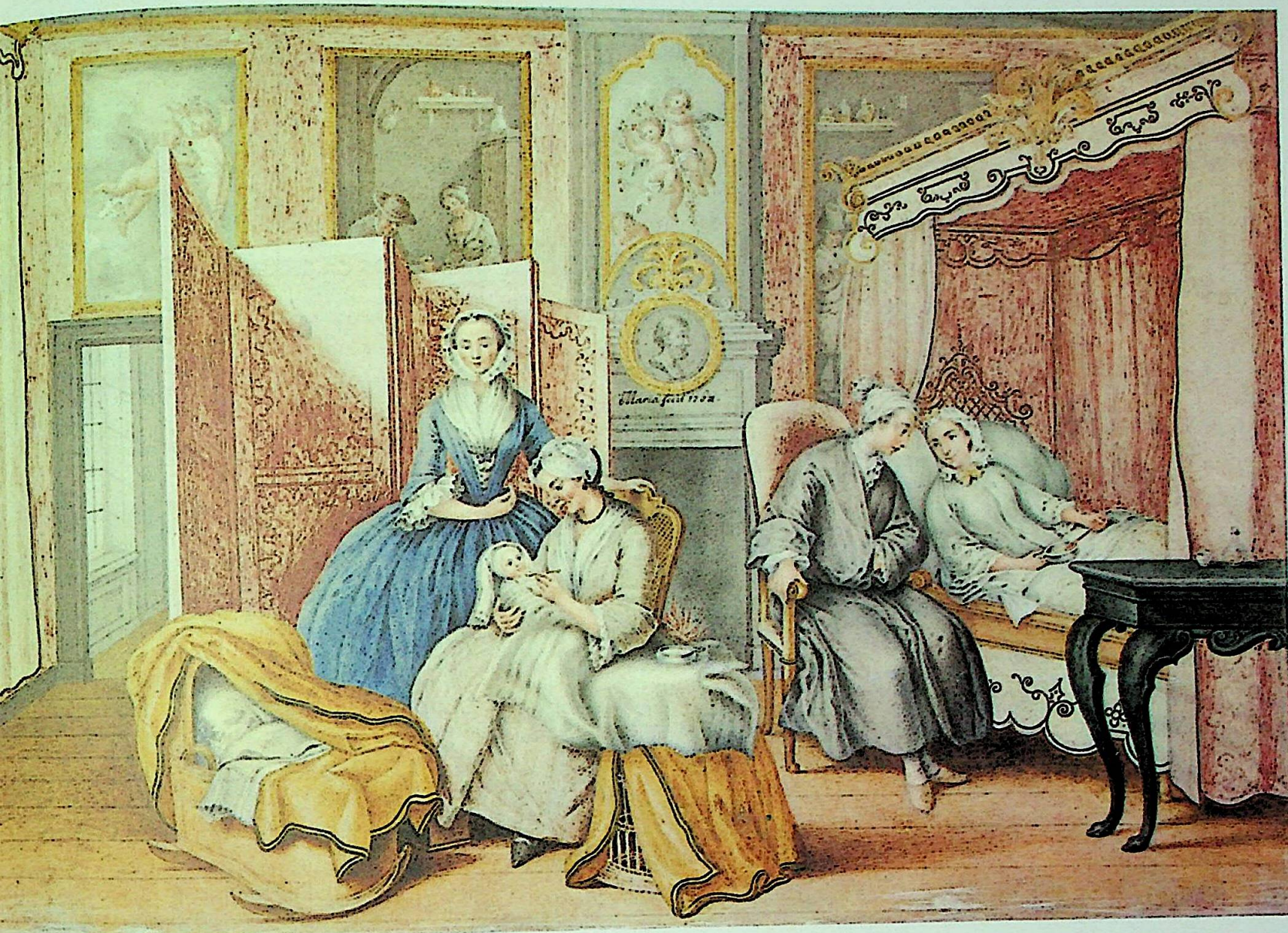
Prussia had survived, thanks to Frederick's genius and determination; but even more of the credit lay with the army and bureaucracy created by his predecessors. In particular, the efficiency of the civil service provided a revenue proportionately greater than that of other European states, and actually as great as that of Russia.

In most respects Frederick was content to follow the same methods as his father. He attempted to keep down imports and encourage exports; waged tariff wars against Austria and Saxony; reduced internal tariff barriers; built canals; drained marshes; and established hundreds of new villages. Sile-

sian ores were vigorously exploited. Production of silks and woollen cloths increased so rapidly that they became the chief Prussian export. There were inevitable conflicts between the state's need for revenue and the needs of production, and inevitable defects in a system so highly regulated and inimical to initiative; but on the only meaningful basis of assessment—comparison with other states—Prussian economic policy worked well.

Frederick was an ubiquitous presence, supervising, directing, checking. Unlike his father, he interfered even in routine matters. He would set up specialised agencies, correspond with local officials over the heads of their superiors, and set one official to spy upon another. Such methods did often get things done more quickly, but they disorganised the machinery of the Prussian administration and made civil servants reluctant to act on their own initiative. These defects were tolerable while the king was a man of exceptional industry and intelligence—that is, while Frederick was king—but inevitably he had no successor as





a one-man state supervisor.

During the Seven Years War, Prussia was devastated by the hostile armies and population declined by about a tenth. Frederick redoubled his efforts: the peasants were kept going by credits and supplies from the war magazines; the currency was restored; a state bank was opened; the growing of potatoes and sugar-beet (preventatives of famine) was encouraged despite opposition from the conservative peasantry. Despite some dubious experiments, state regulation was conspicuously successful in bringing about economic recovery.

The social and economic privileges of the nobility remained untouched; indeed Frederick, unlike his father, preferred to appoint men of noble birth to posts of any importance. In this as in other respects, Frederick became less and less 'enlightened': in fact, the only notable reforms of his reign were judicial. His efforts to increase the peasant's security of tenure are perhaps another exception; but it is more likely that they were prompted by concern for the availability of cannon-fodder.

### Frederick's later years

Between the wars Frederick was still the patron of art and letters, for whom Knobelsdorff built the Berlin Opera House, the east wing of the palace at Charlottenburg, and the Rococo palace designated by Frederick for relaxation—the famous Sans-Souci at Potsdam. Frederick wrote a long poem, *The Art of War* (extensively revised by Voltaire), and a *History of My Times* about the Silesian wars—the first of several such histories. Voltaire himself became a guest of Frederick (1750–3), though the king's treatment of him after they quarrelled indicated that the tyrant was close to the surface in the philosopher-king.

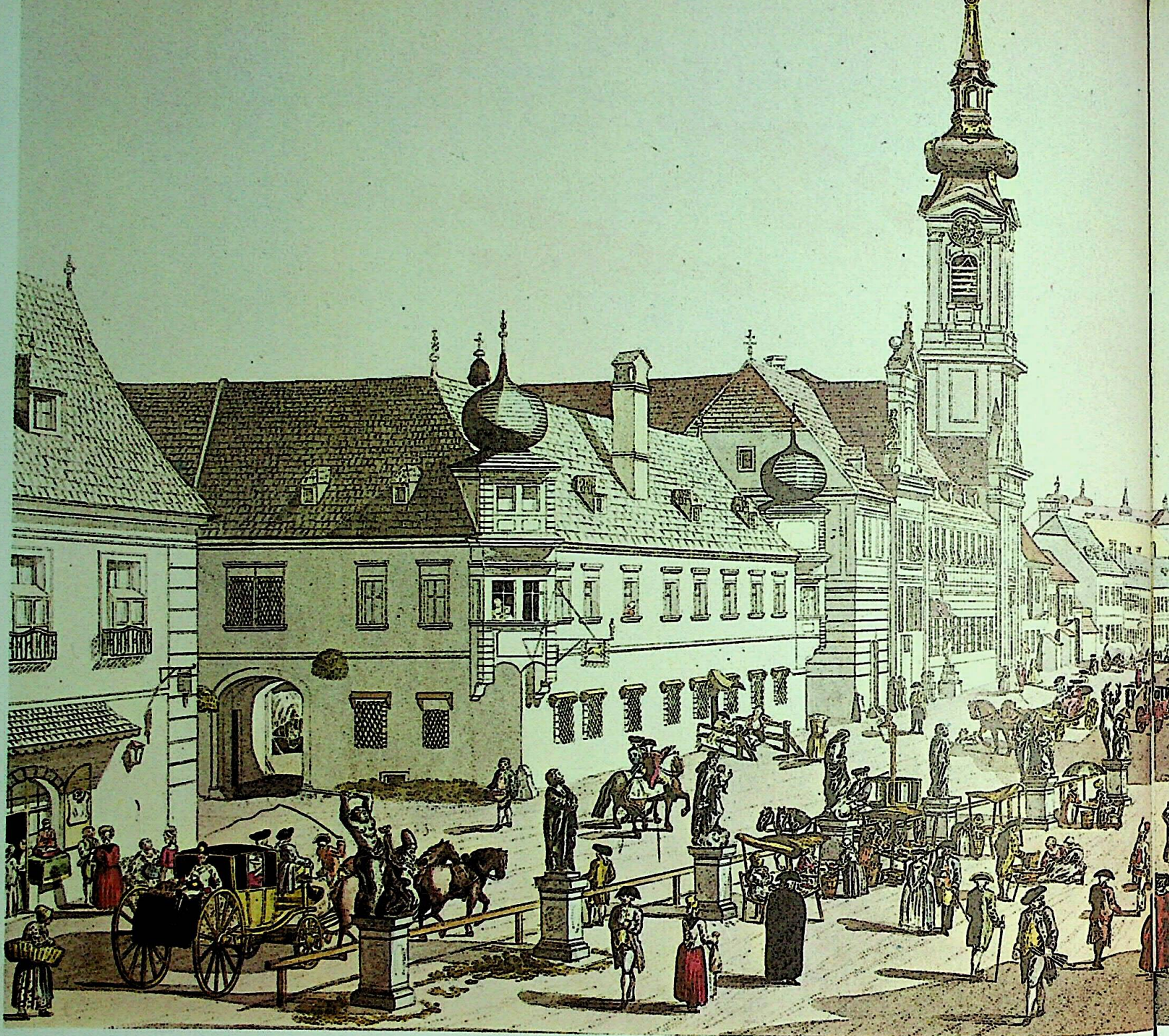
The stress of the Seven Years War strengthened the misanthropic and conservative elements in Frederick's make-up. The brilliant young prince, the glamorous king, were gradually replaced by a bent figure in a shabby, snuff-stained coat, remote from other men in his dedication to the state.

The conservatism of Frederick's foreign

policy was less a matter of choice. Prussia could not afford another war and had no friends. France and Austria remained allies. Britain, Frederick believed, had let him down. He made the only possible alliance open to him, with Russia (1764–80). Frederick had no wish to see Russia expand, and much of his diplomatic activity was in fact designed to prevent his ally from exploiting her victories over the Turks. Poland was another matter: Frederick was enthusiastic in seconding the empress Catherine's suggestion that Russia, Prussia and Austria should each take a slice of Polish territory. The first partition (1772) fulfilled one of Frederick's long-cherished ambitions: the acquisition of West Prussia. This territory contained a large German-speaking and Lutheran element, easily absorbed into a German state; and East Prussia, hitherto indefensible, was joined to the main block of Hohenzollern lands.

This was Frederick's last coup: henceforth his postures were defensive. The war between Prussia and Austria (1777) was a half-hearted affair, but Frederick succeeded





in preventing Austria from acquiring a large part of Bavaria. Perhaps the crowning irony of his career was his leadership of the League of German Princes, formed (1785) to oppose Joseph II's Bavarian exchange scheme. Frederick, the unscrupulous aggressor who had twice broken the peace of the Empire, now marshalled German opinion against the radical schemes of the emperor himself.

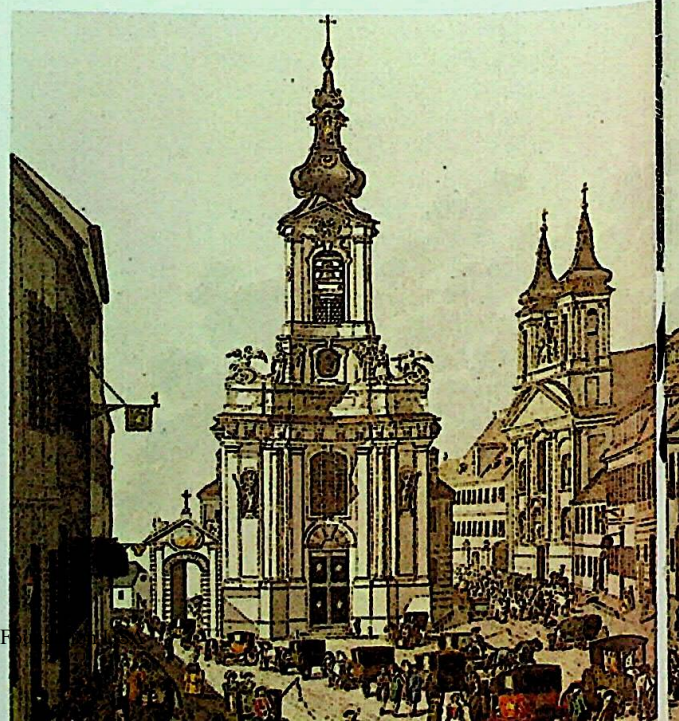
### Frederick's legacy

Under Frederick the Great, Prussia became recognised as a great power and acquired the territory and population (over 5 million by 1786) to support her new status more effectively. In immediate political terms his aims and methods were justified by their success; but their long-term effects were

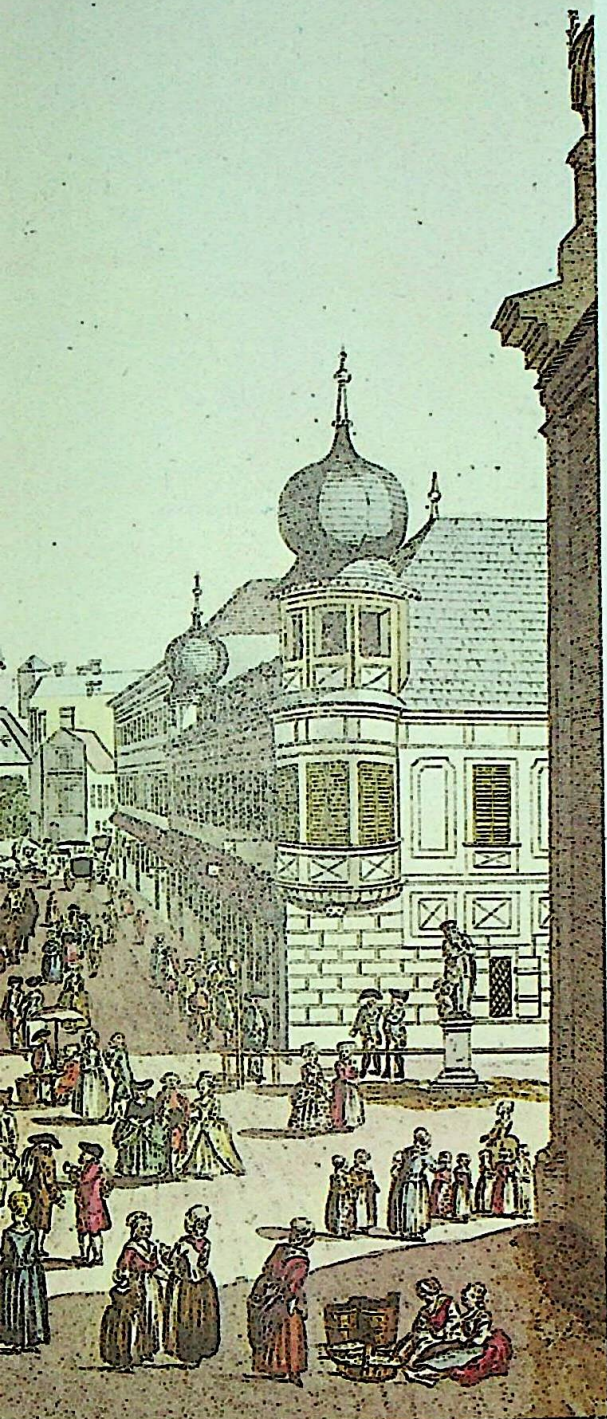
more questionable.

The military aspect of the Prussian state was decisively strengthened. The prestige of the army became unshakable, and its influence was felt everywhere in Prussia. Frederick has, with some justification, been accused of beginning the European arms race: after the Seven Years War the army remained at its wartime size of just under 200,000 men (about 4 per cent of the population), and habits of obedience and belief in force as a method of solving disputes became deeply ingrained in the citizens. In this sense it is possible to blame Frederick and his father for some of the disasters of modern German history.

In the immediate future Prussia continued to expand: Frederick's successor, Frederick William II (1786-97), took part in the Polish partitions of 1793 and 1795. But the

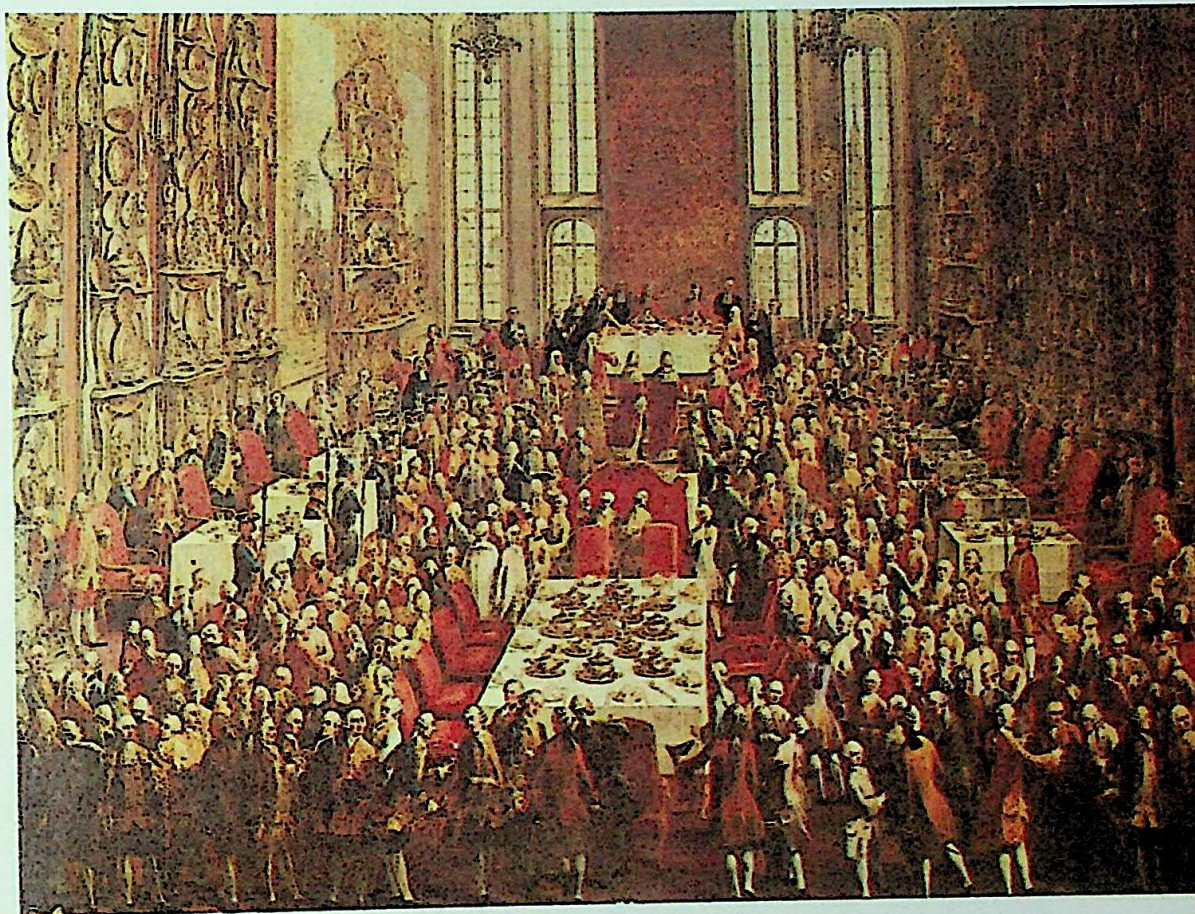






*Vienna in the eighteenth century. The Leopoldstadt (left); the Landstrasse (below). Engravings by Schutz and Ziegler. (National Bibliothek, Vienna.)*

*Below: Joseph II's coronation feast at Frankfurt. The election and coronation of the Holy Roman emperor took place at Frankfurt. Joseph succeeded his father, Francis of Lorraine, as emperor in 1765; his mother, Maria Theresa, ruled Austria until her death in 1780. (Schönbrunn Schloss, Vienna.)*



penalties of rigid structures and unthinking obedience were soon to be visited upon Prussia in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, in which Frederick the Great's army was smashed and the state itself almost destroyed.

### Austria under Charles VI

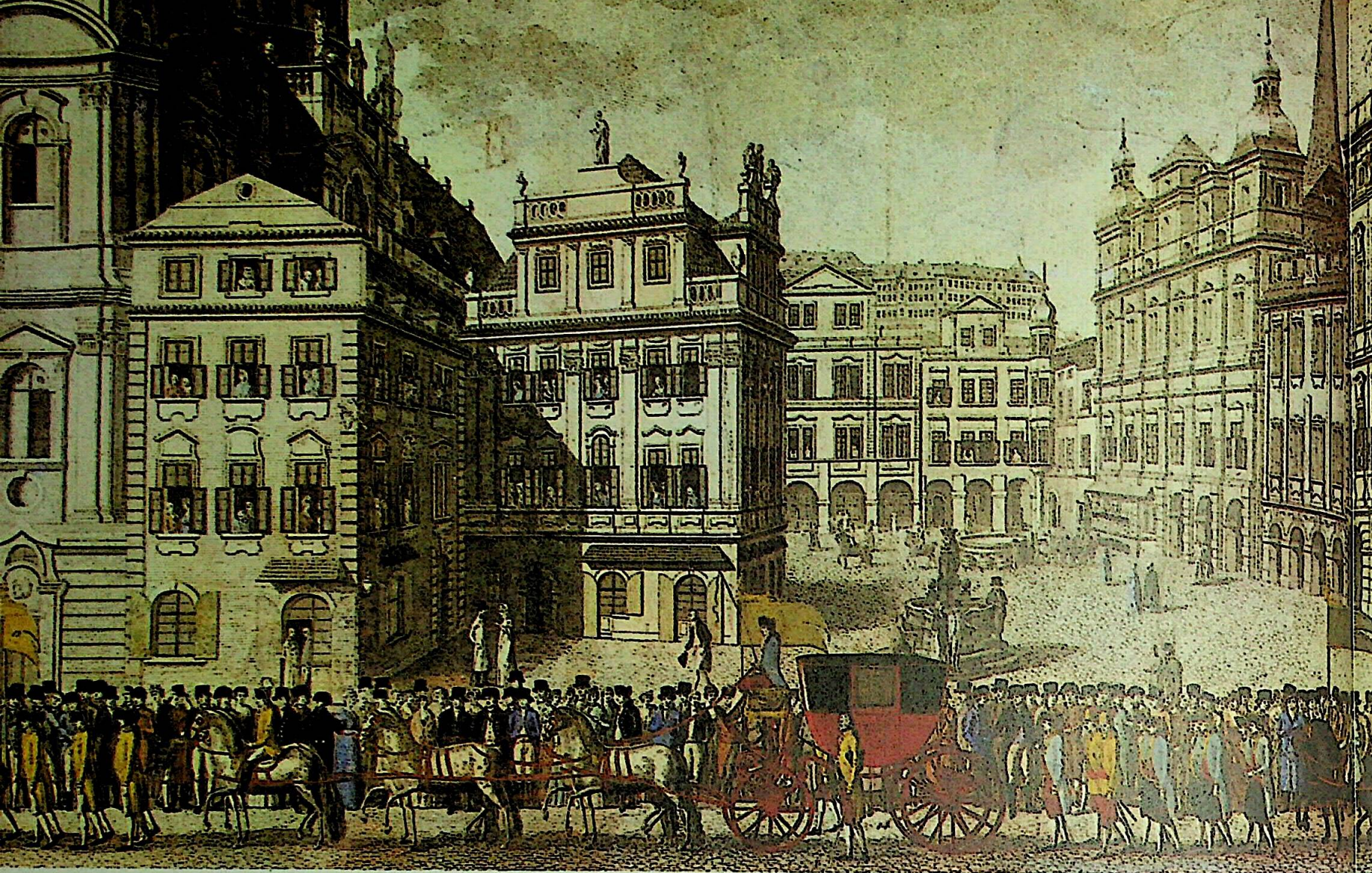
The reign of Charles VI (1711–40) coincided in time almost exactly with that of Frederick William I of Prussia; but whereas Prussia steadily grew in strength, the Austrian monarchy struggled with financial difficulties, military reverses and internal disaffection.

The early years of the reign were promising. The long War of Spanish Succession came to an end, and if a Habsburg no longer sat on the throne of Spain, the Austrian

branch of the family acquired most of Spain's possessions in Europe: the Spanish Netherlands, Milan, Naples, Sardinia. In the war against the Turks (1716–18) Eugene of Savoy crushed the Turkish armies and captured Belgrade; and when peace was made at Passarowitz (1718), Austria gained Temesvar and considerable territory to the south and east of Hungary.

The most pressing internal problem appeared to have been solved when agreement was reached with the Hungarians. The Rackoczi revolt ended in 1712, and Charles was able to negotiate a settlement that was satisfactory to the dynasty, if not entirely so to the state. The Hungarians continued to enjoy a very considerable degree of self-government and to pay little in taxes (the nobility paid nothing); but they accepted the succession of Charles's daughter and the





principle that Hungary was an indivisible part of the Habsburg Empire.

The fact that Charles had no male heir complicated both his internal and external policies. In a declaration of 1713—the 'Pragmatic Sanction'—Charles willed all his dominions to his eldest direct heir, whether male or female; and over the years it became clear that he would be succeeded by his daughter, Maria Theresa (born in 1717). After he had secured the agreement of the Hungarians and his other, more tractable subjects, Charles formally promulgated the Pragmatic Sanction in 1724; but he still needed the acquiescence of the other great powers. This was necessary not because women were regarded as inevitably feeble rulers—though that conviction had not entirely disappeared despite examples to the contrary—but because Maria Theresa had possible rivals. Charles's elder brother, Joseph I, had left two daughters who had married the electors of Bavaria and Saxony; and it seemed likely that other powers would support their claims in order to weaken and possibly dismember the Austrian Empire.

Charles's tortuous and otherwise ineffective foreign policy was primarily intended to avoid this contingency by securing international recognition of Maria Theresa. In this at least he succeeded: by the end of the

War of Polish Succession (1733–5) all the great powers—even the hereditary enemy, France—had guaranteed the Pragmatic Sanction.

It was an ill-advised policy: in return for paper guarantees Charles sacrificed real advantages. Austrian strength and prestige—the only real guarantees of the Pragmatic Sanction—steadily declined. Charles's wars exhausted Austrian finances, yet produced military results that were at best unimpressive. In a new war (1737–9) against the Turks, they were disastrous: Austria was heavily defeated, and all the gains of Passarowitz were lost except Temesvar. The prospect of expanding overseas trade through the Ostend Company had been sacrificed to placate the maritime powers, and the small fleet built at Trieste was sold. Economic growth remained slow, and—as if to punish Austrian weakness with the maximum irony—the most rapidly developing province, Silesia, was lost as soon as Charles died.

### Austria in danger

As soon as Maria Theresa came to the throne, Frederick the Great attacked Silesia, and the electors of Bavaria and Saxony asserted their wives' claims to the Habsburg inheritance. By the summer of 1741, France,

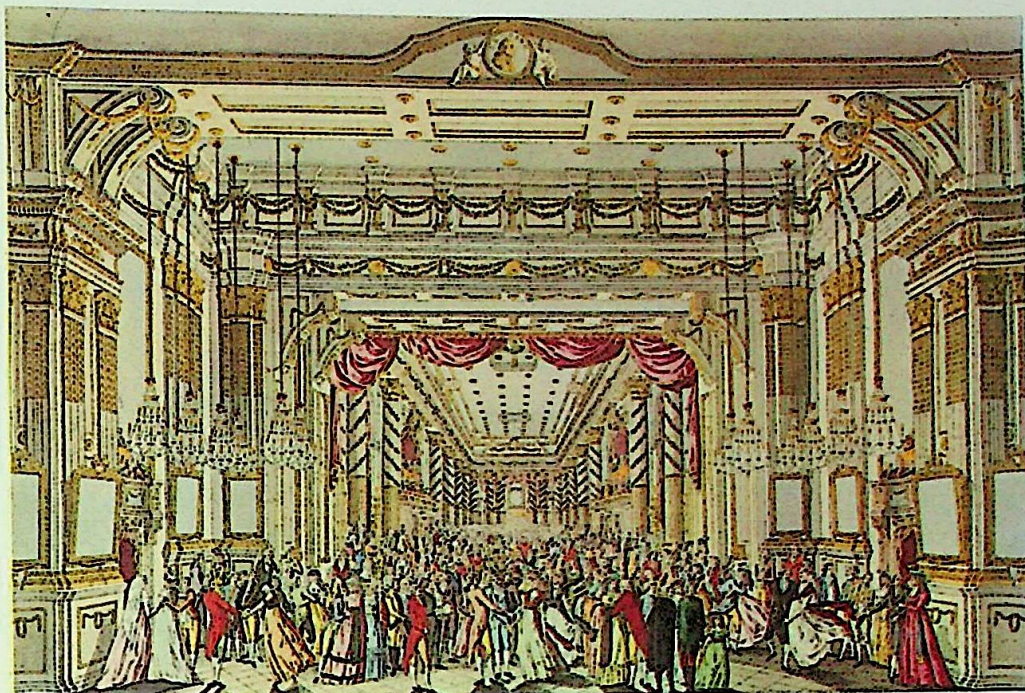
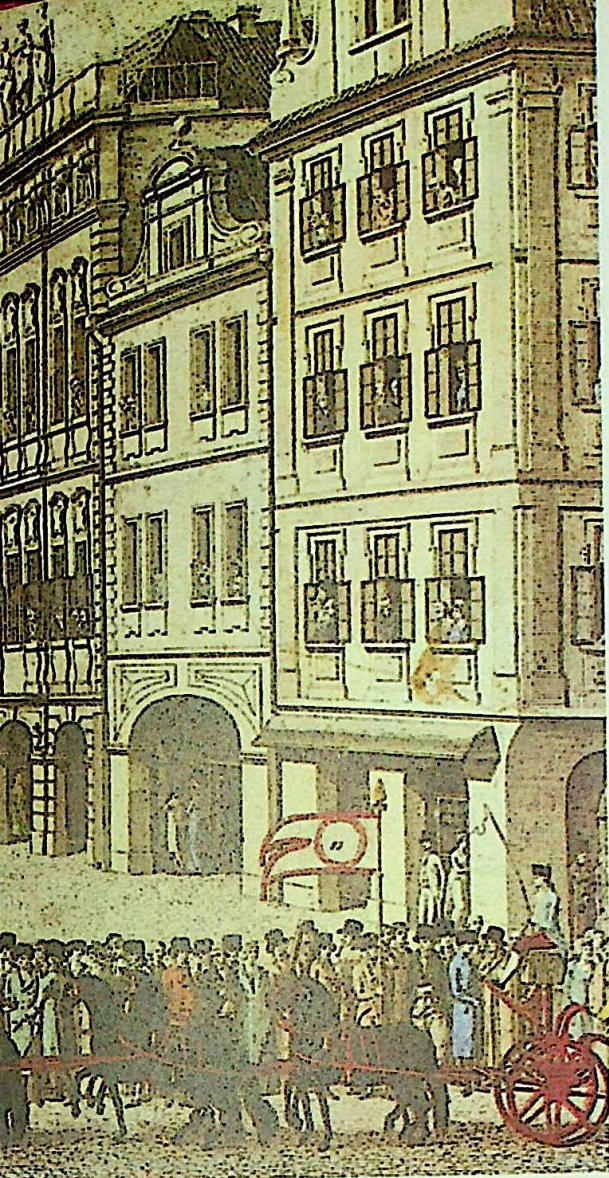
Bavaria and Spain had formed an alliance against Austria, and by October the ill-prepared Austrian army had to face a Franco-Bavarian force in Bohemia as well as Frederick's army in Silesia. The beginning of the War of Austrian Succession appeared to foreshadow the dissolution of the Habsburg state itself.

At this crisis the twenty-three-year-old Maria Theresa behaved with courage and resolution, making a dramatic appeal to the Hungarian nobility which won their support. More immediately important, Frederick the Great effectively dropped out of the war: he had no wish to see his ally France destroy Austria and dominate Europe. The French and Bavarians were driven from Bohemia, and the initiative passed to Austria. The crisis had passed: the fortunes of war fluctuated, as Frederick again intervened (1744–5) to prevent an Austrian triumph; but the existence of Austria was never again threatened.

### The quest for revenge

After the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle (1748), Austrian policy was almost exclusively directed towards revenging her defeat by Prussia and recovering Silesia. Even during the war Maria Theresa would have preferred to make peace with France in order to face





On the death of a Habsburg his successor had to undergo separate coronations as Holy Roman emperor, king of Hungary and king of Bohemia.

Above: Leopold II's coronation procession in Prague; his coronation ball (above right).

Right: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, the musical master of masters, who at a very early age revealed himself as a child prodigy. Before his death at the age of 35, he had composed instrumental dances, suites, serenades and divertimenti; church music; chamber music; songs, operas; concertos, sonatas and symphonies.

Portrait by Josef Lange. (Internationale Stiftung Mozarteum, Salzburg.)







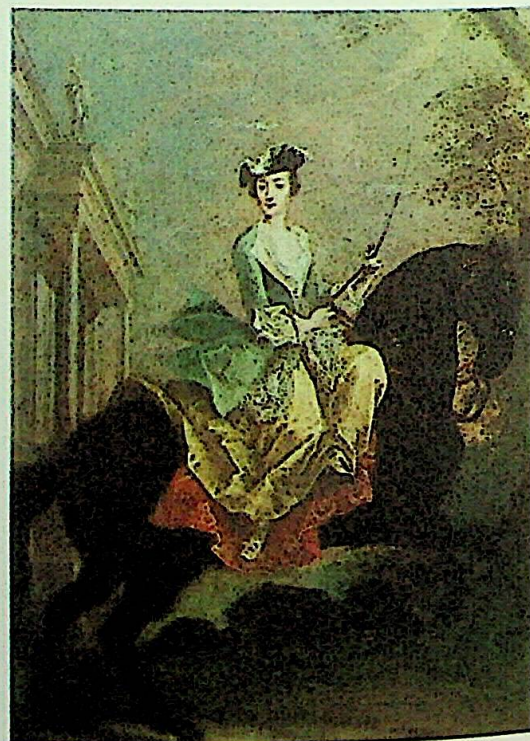
*Posuisti in Capite Eius Coronam de lapide pretioso. Psal. 20. v. 4*

Abb. 1402. Krönung Josephs II. in Frankfurt 1764.  
Kpr. München, Hofbibliothek.

*Above right: the unfortunate Peter III, tsar for only a few months in 1762. Anonymous painting. Peter was deposed by his wife, Catherine, whose portrait by Grohol (right) was painted when she was still a grand duchess.*

*Above right: the banks of the River Neva at St Petersburg. Painting by de Mair. (State Russian Museum, Leningrad.)*

*Above: a contemporary engraving showing the crowning of Joseph II in the Cathedral of St Bartholomew. (Hofbibliothek, Munich.)*







Prussia alone; but she had been hindered by her British allies (who were only interested in fighting France) and by the French obsession with their traditional anti-Habsburg policy. Now she set about winning the friendship of France in earnest.

The architect of this policy was Prince Wenzel von Kaunitz, the outstanding diplomatist of his generation, who became chancellor of Austria in 1753. Kaunitz believed that the Bourbon-Habsburg struggle was no longer relevant to European politics, and that only the destruction of Prussia could restore Austrian primacy in Germany. A new policy required a new partner. Britain had neither the desire nor the ability to intervene in eastern Europe: whereas the support of France, still the most powerful nation in Europe, would ensure victory, and French subsidies would keep the Russian (as well as the Austrian) armies in the field.

While Kaunitz negotiated with France, another of Maria Theresa's advisers, Count Ludwig Haugwitz, was organising the military, administrative and financial reforms which might enable Austria to match the Prussian war machine. The army was subjected to a more rigorous training: conditions of service were improved; and administrative and tax reforms greatly increased revenue. Austria and Bohemia, the most docile Habsburg possessions, were the chief targets, and Austro-Bohemian institutions were streamlined and integrated. Now, as later, Hungary in particular was handled with tact. Maria Theresa had won the devotion of the Hungarian nobles in 1741, and she retained it by giving them pre-

ferential treatment and respecting their privileges.

Meanwhile, Kaunitz's diplomacy met with limited success. Austro-French negotiations were cordial, but showed little sign of reaching a conclusion. Only Frederick the Great's miscalculations angered the French into making a defensive alliance with Austria (1756) and then brought them into the coalition against Prussia.

Kaunitz's diplomacy triumphed, but the Austrian and other coalition armies failed to give Prussia the coup de grâce: and Austria emerged from the Seven Years War with nothing to show for her expenditure of blood and treasure.

## Maria Theresa as enlightened despot

After the disappointment of the Seven Years War, Maria Theresa avoided adventures in foreign policy and determined upon a more thoroughgoing reorganisation of her dominions. All internal policy was brought under the direction of a single Council of State: and a central bureau, the Directorium, controlled the administrative system. A beginning was made in efficient budgeting, while the functions of the provincial estates were largely taken over by royal officials, and further military reforms were introduced by the empress's son, Joseph.

Maria Theresa's agrarian reforms were more radical still. Their original motive was financial: a peasant who performed heavy services for his lord could not make his own land productive; so he could not pay much in taxes. But the investigations of

royal commissioners revealed a degree of peasant misery that produced a genuine humanitarian revulsion in Maria Theresa, who was only with difficulty persuaded not to abolish serfdom entirely. Maximum labour services were established in successive provinces over a period of years (1767-78) and the result was a definite improvement in the lot of the peasantry. The direction in which the government hoped to move was made clear by their treatment of peasants on crown lands, who were freed from all servile obligations and became simple tenants. By and large, however, landowners failed to follow the government's lead.

These measures demonstrate the extent to which 'enlightened despotism' sprang from the needs of the state rather than the personality or convictions of the ruler. Nobody could have been less the received image of the enlightened despot than the pious, conservative, sturdily sensible but scarcely intellectual Maria Theresa: yet she proved willing to override custom and tradition in the interests of the state and to tax the clergy and dissolve monasteries in the face of papal opposition. She, much more than self-conscious Enlightenment intellectuals like Frederick II and Catherine of Russia, deserves a place among the enlightened despots.

## The radical emperor

Maria Theresa's successor was her son, Joseph II (1780-90), who intensified the programme of radical reform. Joseph lacked his mother's caution and common sense; he







*Two of Catherine's lovers. Grigory Orlov, the guards officer who helped her to power (above). Painting by Torelli. Grigory Potemkin, who succeeded in remaining one of Catherine's chief advisers after he ceased to be her lover (right). Portrait by Lampy. (State Russian Museum, Leningrad.) Far right: Orlov and his brother Alexey, who appears to have been the actual murderer of Peter III. Painting by Denely. (State History Museum, Moscow.) Below right: Catherine's son, later Tsar Paul I. Anonymous painting. (State Russian Museum, Leningrad.)*



was a doctrinaire Enlightenment prince who meditated profound changes in the structure of the state regardless of social, regional or religious difficulties. He proceeded at a pace that was dangerous in itself, and madness when combined with an adventurous foreign policy.

Joseph's hankering after military and diplomatic success became apparent even in his mother's lifetime. It was mainly he who convinced Maria Theresa that Austria should take part in the first partition of Poland (1772); and it was he who championed the Bavarian succession scheme which led to war with Prussia (1778), a fiasco that drained the Austrian treasury without achieving anything. Similar adventures were to ruin all Joseph's attempts at internal reform.

In the early years of the reign all went well. Administrative centralisation was carried to its logical conclusion, and the empire was divided into administrative areas that

ignored local and regional differences (a characteristic Enlightenment attitude, with both strengths and weaknesses). Equality before the law and religious toleration were introduced. The peasants were given personal liberty (that is, no longer forbidden to leave the estates on which they worked) and security of tenure for themselves and their descendants.

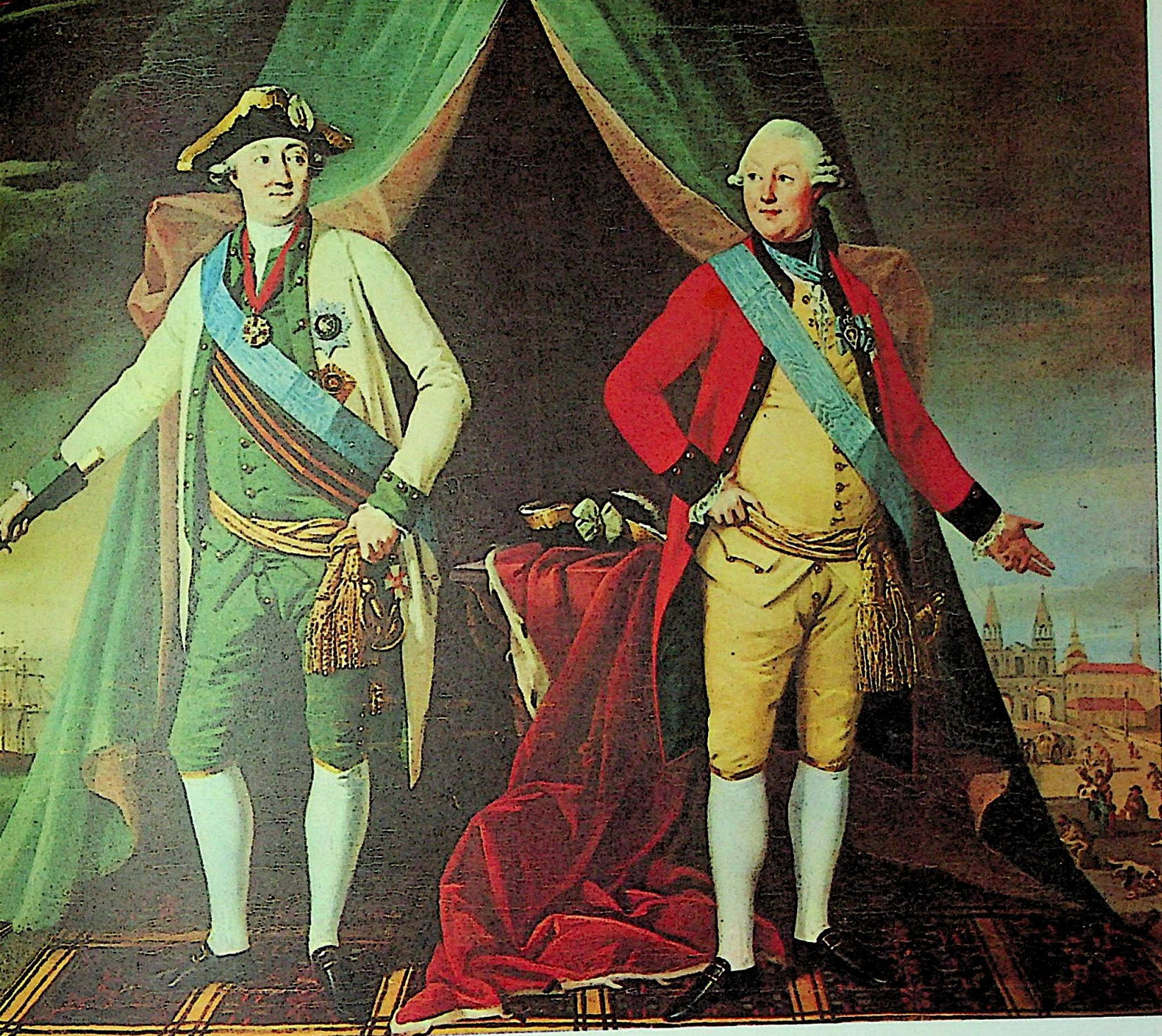
Joseph made the first sustained effort to end Austrian economic backwardness. No consideration other than utility was allowed to influence policy. For example, several hundred monasteries were dissolved because they were non-productive; as Joseph proclaimed (in the characteristic accents of the Enlightenment), 'orders which are absolutely useless to their fellow-men cannot be pleasing to God'. Internally, restrictions on trade were removed. The state ceased to subsidise industry, and the guilds lost much of their power to restrict production and commerce. External commercial policy re-

mained mercantilist: tariffs were imposed on foreign goods in order to stimulate production in Austria, and Joseph concluded a number of advantageous trade agreements with other states.

Interference with the economic and social systems prevailing in the countryside—still, of course, the heart of the Austrian economy—went even further. During the seventeenth-eighties a comprehensive census and land register was compiled for all Joseph's dominions; the feudal obligations of the peasants were swept away and replaced by fixed money rents; and finally, in 1789, a land tax representing 12 per cent of yearly income was imposed on landowner and peasant alike, who now became equal before the tax-collector as well as the law.

The magnitude of the changes introduced by Joseph—changes that would have transformed Austria into a modern state—was bound to arouse opposition. They quickly justified themselves in terms of economic





growth and increased state revenue; but they offended most sections of the population in some respect—religious belief, regional independence, financial advantage, social superiority. Nor should the 'despotic' (as opposed to the 'enlightened') aspect of Joseph's policies be ignored: the destruction of local liberties, the use of secret police, the imposition of German as the 'official language of the Habsburg dominions. Even without foreign entanglements Joseph would have encountered difficulties; military defeat completely destroyed his policies.

### Collapse of the Josephan state

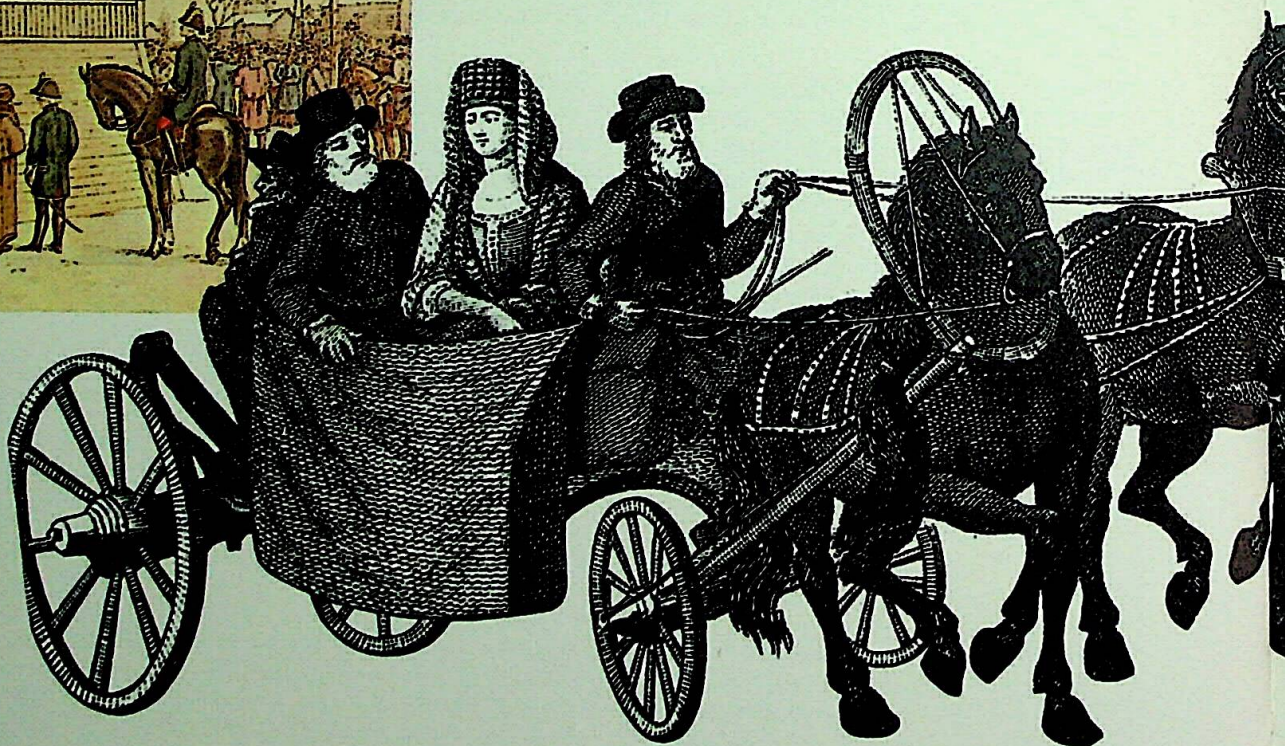
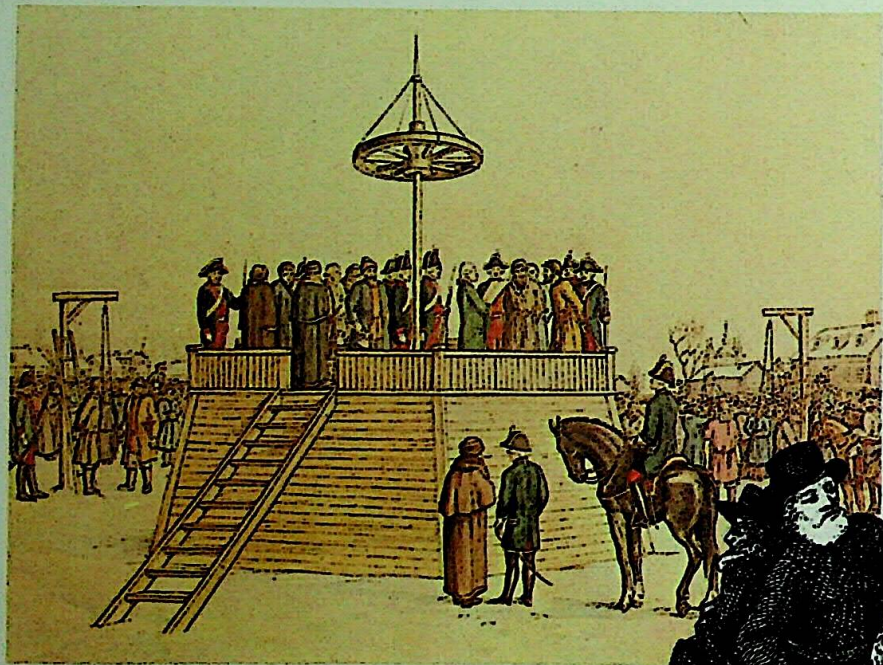
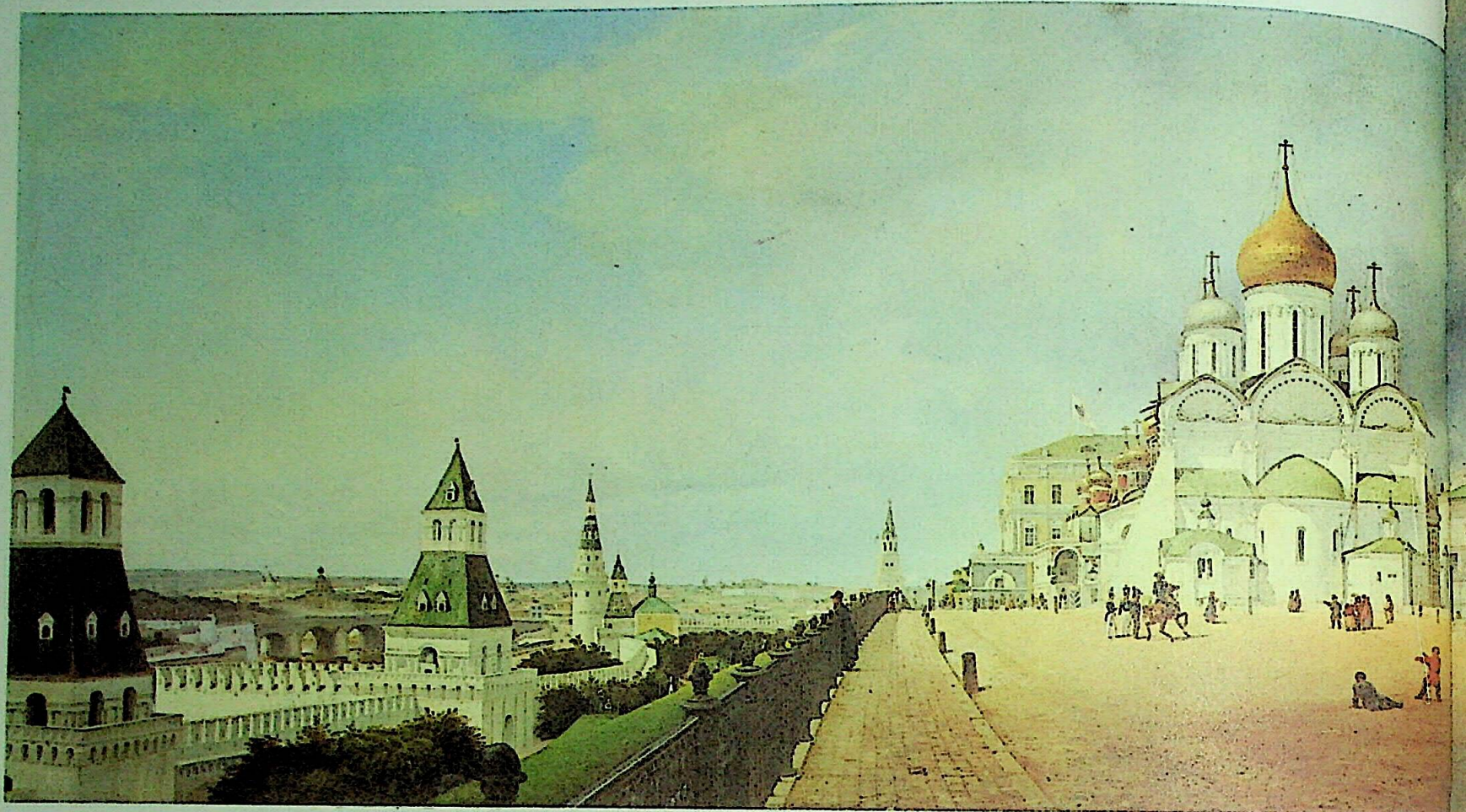
Joseph's early foreign policy failed; but its failure was not vital. The Austrian Netherlands were difficult to control and of limited commercial value, since the 1648 treaties had given Dutch shipping exclusive use of the River Scheldt. Joseph first attempted to force the Dutch to open the Scheldt, and

then elaborated a scheme to exchange the Austrian Netherlands for Bavaria, the acquisition of which would have enlarged the main block of Habsburg territory. But his Russian allies let him down, and in the face of French opposition and Frederick II's League of Princes (1785), Joseph had to abandon both of his objectives.

His real misfortunes began with the war against the Turks (1788), into which he allowed himself to be led by Catherine. The war was a disaster: Russian strength proved an illusion and the Austrian armies again failed in the field. The exorbitant cost of the war wrecked Austrian finances, trade was disrupted, and prices rose steeply. New taxes to pay for the war made Joseph even more unpopular with all classes. The absence of the army made it impossible to suppress discontent, and Hungary and the Netherlands rebelled. Disillusioned, Joseph cancelled most of his reforms before he died, leaving the monarchy again in a state of crisis.











Above: view of Moscow in the nineteenth century by Gartner. (Charlottenburg Schloss, West Berlin.)

Right: Catherine in travel dress (1787) by H. Chibanov. (State Russian Museum, Leningrad.)

Left: the execution of Pugachev in Red Square, Moscow. Contemporary engraving by Bolotov.

Below: merchant's equipage. From an eighteenth-century engraving, The House of Pachkov. (State History Museum, Moscow.)



## German reawakening

Eighteenth-century Germany remained provincial and backward. Limited agricultural advances were made, but, with the partial exceptions of Prussia and the Rhineland, industry was of minimal importance. Urban development was slow and the urban middle class small and uninfluential.

German artistic and cultural development was nonetheless remarkable. The princely craze for culture, initially prompted by envy of Louis XIV, led to court patronage of architects, musicians and writers. Catholic Germany and Austria produced a sumptuously decorative Baroque architecture that reached its apogee in spectacular and dramatic churches and monasteries. The Germans became the leading musical nation with the appearance of the composers, Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750) and Handel (1685–1759), and the Viennese masters Gluck (1714–87), Haydn (1732–1809) and Mozart (1756–91); Vienna, where Beethoven lived and worked from 1792 as pianist and composer, was to be the musical capital of Europe right down to the late nineteenth century. Literature, though held back for a time by imitation of French models, produced a dramatist and critic of the first order in Lessing (1729–81) and a universal genius in Goethe (1749–1832), who was followed in the seventeen-nineties by a galaxy of talents. The foundation of Halle (1694) and Göttingen (1736–7) began the

European pre-eminence of German universities, and the writings of Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) that of German philosophy. Culturally, if not yet politically, Germany had become one of the great nations of Europe.

## Enlightenment and despotism in Germany

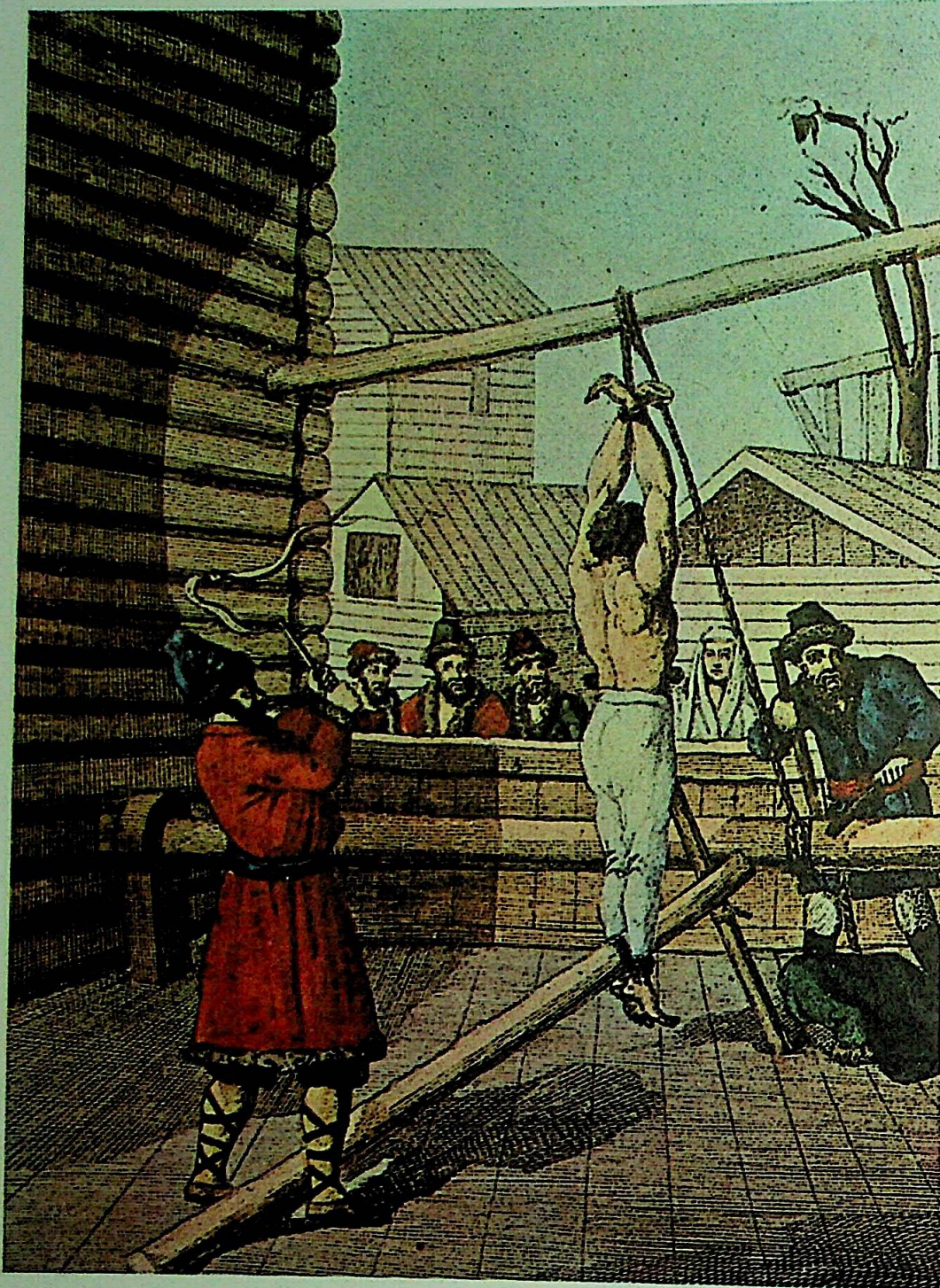
Though Charles Albert of Bavaria had a brief moment of glory as Holy Roman emperor (1742–5), the political history of Germany was dominated by Austro-Prussian dualism. The German princes became, even more markedly than in the previous period, dependants and auxiliaries of greater powers. Some were even content to supplement their revenues by hiring out their troops, providing Britain in particular with a convenient method of responding to continental emergencies.

Such conditions did not offer much incentive to the would-be enlightened despot; and for that matter the smallness of most states precluded ambitious undertakings. The only prince who instituted radical reforms comparable with Joseph II's was Charles Frederick of Baden, who imposed a uniform tax on land and abolished serfdom. But 'Josephism', as the emperor's anti-clerical policies came to be called, was adopted by a number of Catholic rulers, including ecclesiastical princes.

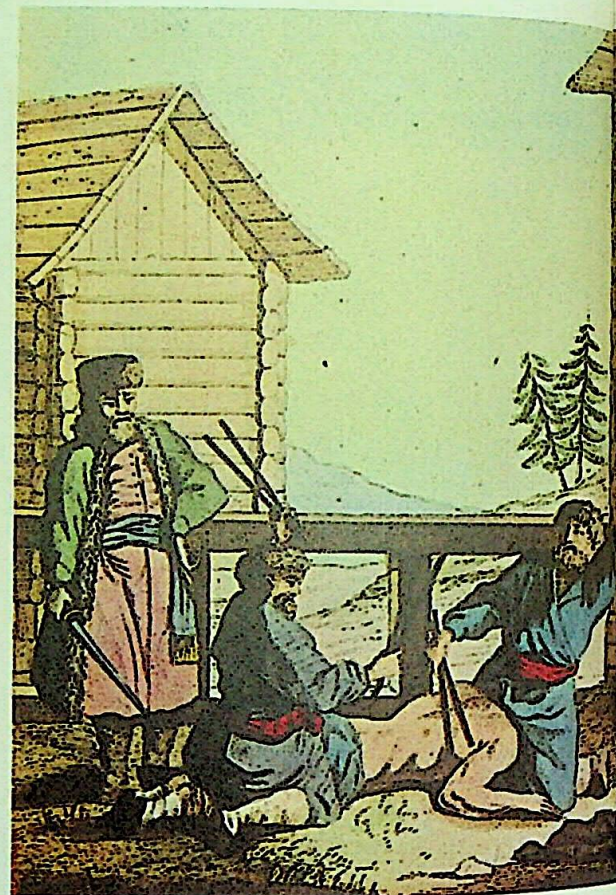
Towards the end of the pre-revolutionary

His successor, the able Leopold II (1790–2), had been an outstanding reformer as duke of Tuscany, and struggled to preserve some of the advances made under Joseph. He made peace with the Turks, managed to stabilise the internal situation, and even began to elaborate plans for constitutional reforms involving popular representation; but his death ended any prospect of continued reform. The increasing radicalism of the French Revolution panicked Leopold's successor into blind reaction: the Austrian experiment in enlightened despotism was over.





*The Russian landlord's control over his serfs was such that punishment was more arbitrary, though hardly more savage, than elsewhere in Europe. The knout (left); the bastinado (right). Eighteenth-century engravings. (State Russian Museum, Leningrad.)*



period, there were indications that Enlightenment attitudes towards politics and society had begun to filter down to a wider public. (In Austria this had been deliberately fostered by Maria Theresa and Joseph, who had encouraged the production of books and pamphlets attacking the privileges of landowners and clergy.) The abolition of serfdom and noble privileges, religious toleration and political freedom became widely discussed as news of the French Revolution arrived. Enlightened despotism, it now seemed, involved an internal contradiction: to gain public support the despot had to spread enlightenment—which, however, led men to question despotism.

Even before the French Revolution, German rulers had become alarmed by the

development of a German public opinion. Freethinkers had begun to be persecuted in Bavaria and Prussia; the limited freedoms characteristic of enlightened despotism had begun to be curtailed. Whether or not these events were part of a more general European 'revolutionary crisis', as some historians believe, is difficult to determine. After 1789, opinions in Germany (and everywhere else in Europe) were determined not by internal events but by reaction to the French Revolution.

### Russia: Peter's heirs

By the time of Peter the Great's death in 1725, Russia had begun to emerge from the semi-oriental seclusion of previous cen-

turies. Peter had imported Western technology and developed industries, created a large and formidable army, and won for Russia a 'window on the West' in the Baltic provinces wrested from Sweden. To set the seal on his achievements he had built a new capital, St Petersburg, on the newly acquired coastline, where it faced Europe.

The work begun by Peter was far from complete. Russia was still technologically backward, with an almost wholly illiterate population engaged in agriculture and hunting. The furs and timber of the far north were still the chief source of wealth. Industry and overseas trade grew in the eighteenth century—particularly the iron industry in the Urals, which dominated the European market until coke-smelted British iron began





Even in the eighteenth century, Russians often appeared outlandish or 'oriental' to Western eyes.

Left: the wife of the Russian ambassador in Berlin. Painting by Matveev.

Below: the Russian archbishop of Philippopolis (now Plovdiv, Bulgaria). Painting by Anton Schoonjans.

(Charlottenburg Schloss, West Berlin.)



to overtake it in the seventeen-sixties. But in general, capital remained short, techniques rudimentary and communications poor. Lacking another Peter the Great, and handicapped by the inherent disadvantages of a serf-economy, Russia continued to lag behind the West.

Even at the beginning of the century Russia was the most populous state in Europe apart from France, with more inhabitants than Austria and Prussia combined. It was this fact that enabled her to become a great power despite her backwardness (though, ironically, abundant manpower may have helped to perpetuate that backwardness by providing a temporarily adequate substitute for technological development). By the end of the eighteenth

century the population of Russia, swollen by natural increase and acquisitions of territory, stood at thirty-six million, far surpassing that of France.

### Masters and men

The majority of this population were serfs, engaged in cottage industries or agriculture, who paid rent in money or kind, or worked so many days a week on their lord's land. The serf was little better than a slave: he worked, married and travelled as and when his lord determined, and was liable to be sold and taken to his new owner's estates without his family. During the eighteenth century the serf's position deteriorated further as landlords increased their demands

and strengthened their legal rights; ultimately, under Catherine II, they acquired authority to send serfs to Siberia as convicts without public trial. Not surprisingly, the eighteenth century was a period of peasant unrest.

By contrast, the position of the nobility was improving. As well as increased control over their serfs, they won greater personal freedom and a privileged status. Peter the Great had instituted compulsory state service for life, controlled their movements and forbidden them to divide their estates; but under his successors these measures were relaxed or reversed. The tradition of state service remained strong, but a large section of the nobility took the opportunity to become a leisured class, comparable with—



*Right: the imperial palace in the village of Kolomensky. Eighteenth-century aquarelle. Far right: two views of Moscow from the Kremlin. Engravings after Delabarte, c. 1790.*

*Bottom, right: the Kameny Bridge, Moscow. Engraving by Lory after Delabarte. (State History Museum, Moscow.)*

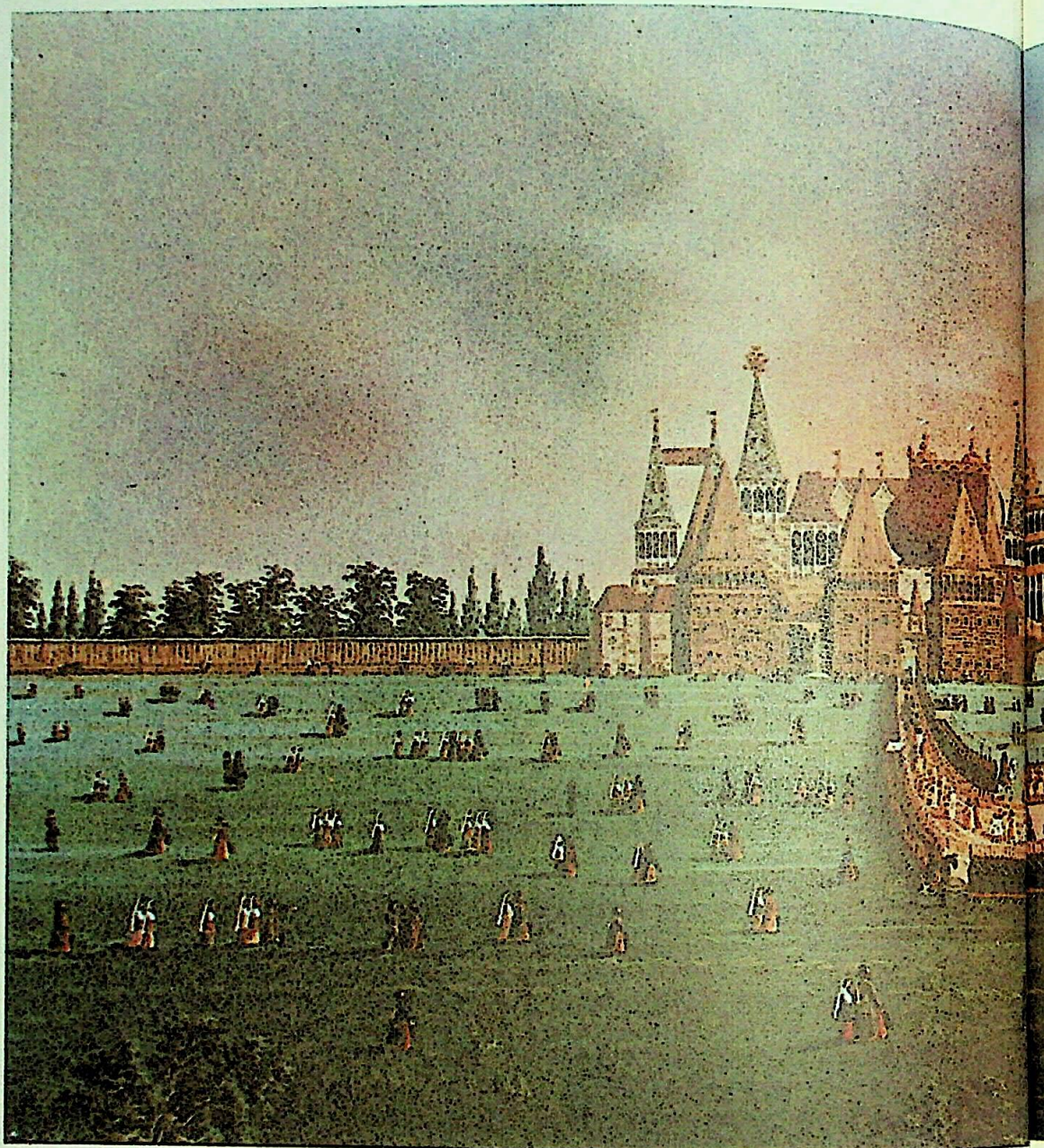
and imitative of—their Western counterparts. Only political power was denied them: in Russia too, privilege was a tacit return for noble acquiescence in the continuation of the autocracy. The only serious attempt to limit imperial power—the conditions imposed by the Privy Council on Anne when they offered her the crown in 1730—did not survive her accession.

## Russia becomes a great power

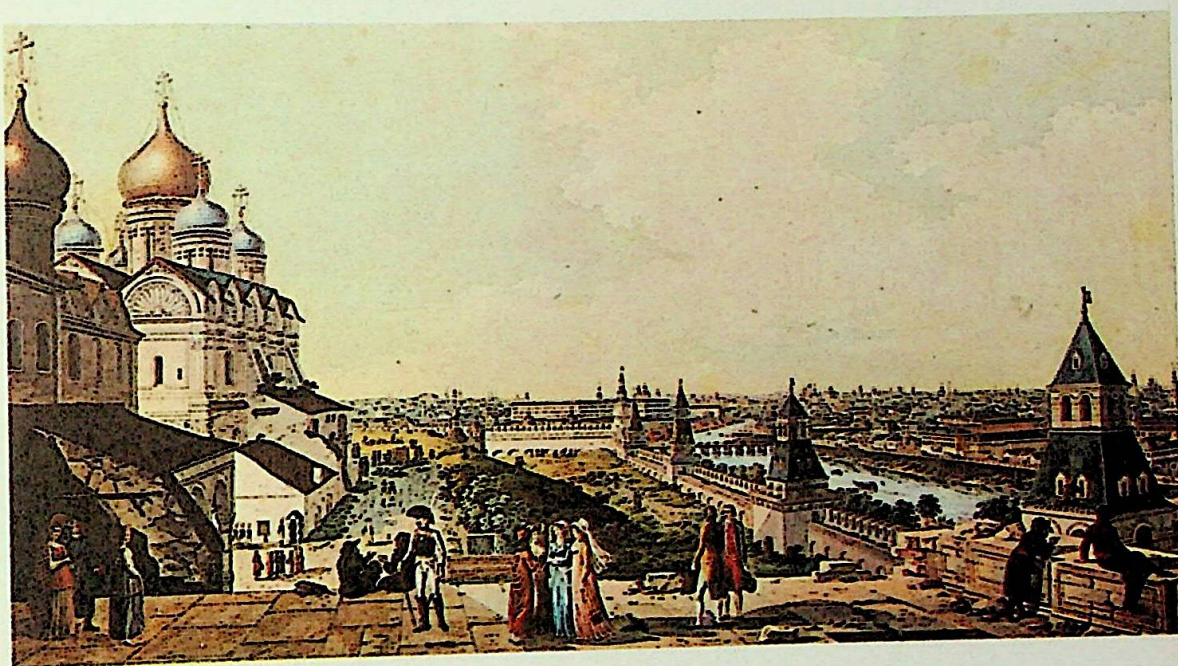
Peter the Great's successors had little of his ability and none of his determination. Under Catherine I (1725–7), Peter II (1727–30), Anne (1730–40), and Ivan IV (1740–1), the government was an indolent autocracy largely at the mercy of opposing factions. The coup d'état that replaced Ivan IV by Peter the Great's daughter, Elizabeth (1741–61), began a period of relative stability, though the intrigues of lovers, favourites, ministers and diplomats were still the determinants of public policy. In the eyes of Western observers, habituated to dynastic stability and a bureaucratic absolutism, Russia continued to be a barbaric 'Eastern' state, ruled through the seraglio.

However badly governed, Russia had become a force in Europe, albeit an erratic one which was liable to be paralysed by a coup or change of ruler (as happened in 1741 and 1762), and which could often afford to take the field only with the help of subsidies from another power. The War of Polish Succession (1733–5) made it clear that Russia, not France, was now the paramount influence in Polish affairs. The war of 1736–9 against the Turks revealed that Russia was stronger than Austria, her ally in the struggle after 1737. Whereas Austria was forced to make a humiliating separate peace, Russia at least regained Azov, which Peter the Great had lost in 1711. Easy victories over Sweden (1741–3) showed that here too the balance of strength had altered decisively in Russia's favour. In the West, fear of 'the Russian colossus'—a fear that was to become irrational and obsessive in many nineteenth-century statesmen—had already begun to be expressed. Frederick the Great warned his successors that it was imperative to 'cultivate the friendship of these barbarians'. As yet, circumstances—and ineptitude—prevented Russia from reaping the harvest of her victories.

The Seven Years War followed the same







pattern. Russia took her part in a great European coalition, held East Prussia for the duration of the war, and even briefly occupied Berlin (1760), making her status as a great power indisputable. But the war also revealed the eccentricity of the new tsar, Peter III (1761–2), who took Russia out of the war because he admired Frederick the Great too much to fight against him.

Much of our information about Peter is untrustworthy, since it derives from his wife, Catherine, who supplanted him. But, if not quite the ignorant lunatic described by Catherine, he displayed an eccentricity that was little short of madness in an occupant of the dangerous throne of Russia. Peter, the half-German Duke of Holstein, ended the war against Prussia, openly displayed his preference for his Holstein troops, paraded his Lutheranism and insulted the Orthodox Church.

The outcome was inevitable. Catherine won over the guards regiments and, abetted by her lover, Grigory Orlov (a guards officer), deposed her husband.

## Catherine II

The new empress was even less Russian than Peter. Sophia of Anhalt-Zerbst, who had been renamed Catherine on her reception into the Russian Orthodox Church, was the daughter of a Prussian noble family. In 1745 she became the bride of Peter, at that time heir to the throne, as part of one of Frederick the Great's diplomatic manoeuvres.

Catherine's early years in Russia were dangerous and difficult, and on occasion she was almost caught in the web of intrigue and counter-intrigue that characterised Elizabeth's reign. In this hard school she learned political realism. Unlike Peter, she adopted Russian manners, learned the language and professed Orthodoxy. When her hour struck, she was able to put herself forward as the representative of the Russian people, Orthodoxy, and the army. First Peter, then Ivan IV (who had survived in confinement since 1741) were murdered, and Catherine was able to remain the un-

disputed ruler of Russia until her death in 1796.

## The pseudo-Enlightenment

Before she became empress, Catherine educated herself in the philosophy of the Enlightenment, becoming familiar with the works of Bayle, Montesquieu, Voltaire and Beccaria. Later, when she corresponded with Voltaire, Diderot and others, she took the opportunity to picture herself as an enlightened ruler, and Russia as a well-administered land of plenty. Catherine herself laid the basis for her European reputation, and began to be called 'the Great' as a result of her own propaganda.

Russian realities were very different. Catherine toyed with schemes to create a legislative assembly and codify the laws, and made some efforts to revive Peter the Great's educational programme; but at heart she cared more for the triumphs of war and diplomacy. Besides, any reform would jeopardise the tacit alliance between





Left: the banks of the Neva at St Petersburg. Two details from the painting by de Mair. (State Russian Museum, Leningrad.)



the autocracy and nobility. Catherine loved power too much—and for that matter shared too many aristocratic prejudices—to take the risk. Only in secularising Church property—a measure foreshadowed by her predecessors—did she act in a manner of which *philosophes* and enlightened despots alike would have approved. One incident illuminates her real position. In 1769 she began publishing a journal designed to improve Russian manners and morals; but when the numerous periodicals that flattered her by imitation were joined by Nikolai Novikov's *The Drone*, which attempted serious social analysis, it was promptly suppressed.

The gulf between privileged and unprivileged was in fact deliberately widened. In the few months of Peter III's reign, the emancipation of the nobility had been completed. Under Catherine they were loaded with privileges, culminating in a Charter of the Nobility (1785) which confirmed all their gains over the century and gave them a share in local government. Hundreds of thousands of state peasants passed into serfdom as gifts to her noble supporters from the prodigal Catherine, and many of the peasants in lands conquered by Russia also become serfs. The condition of the peasantry continued to deteriorate as masters increased their demands in order to set up manorial industries or share the pleasures of life in St Petersburg.

Catherine's court was more sophisticated than that of her predecessors. To superficial observers St Petersburg appeared 'the Athens of the North', for which foreign architects designed beautiful new buildings—the Winter Palace, the Hermitage, Tsarskoe Selo. Its society was dominated by the spirit of the Enlightenment in its more superficial aspects: use of French and displays of wit, cynicism and polished manners. In this respect, too, Catherine's reign was a pseudo-Enlightenment—a tribute to the French culture which contemporaries were prone to identify with the Enlightenment.

## Pugachev

The great rebellion of 1733–4 can be regarded as the peasants' verdict on Catherine and previous rulers. The rebels were led by Emilian Pugachev, a Don Cossack adventurer who claimed to be the dead Peter III (a type of imposture frequently adopted by Russian rebels). Exploited serfs, persecuted members of the sect of Old Believers, discontented non-Russian peoples, and all who resented control by distant St Petersburg, joined Pugachev, who was soon in control of much of the Volga region.





During the reign of Catherine the Great, Russia gained six million new subjects and vast territories in the south. The conclusion of the war with Turkey in 1774 brought a foothold on the Black Sea and right of passage through the Dardanelles. In 1783 Catherine annexed the Crimea and by 1792 she gained, from the Turks, control of the northern shore of the Black Sea. The second and third partitions of Poland gave Russia the largest share of territory.

At first the rebellion was not taken very seriously, but when Pugachev laid siege to Orenburg and repulsed a relieving force, Catherine ordered a full-scale campaign to be mounted. Orenburg was relieved, but Kazan fell, and for a time Moscow itself seemed threatened. The arrival of Russian forces released by the Russo-Turkish peace (1774) sealed Pugachev's fate. His followers were hunted down, areas which had supported him were subjected to terrible re-

prisals, and Pugachev himself was captured and executed.

Pugachev's rebellion increased Catherine's conservatism. Her reaction was to create a uniform system of provincial administration (1775) with which the nobility were associated. In theory at least it should have led to better government; but its main object was to increase control over the countryside. Repression and vigilance, not reform, was Catherine's formula for the peasant problem.

## Catherine's conquests

Her claim to greatness lies in her conduct of war and diplomacy: she made Russia more powerful, if not happier. At the beginning of her reign Catherine entertained Nikita Panin's scheme of a 'northern alliance' with Prussia, Poland, the Baltic states and Britain against the French and Austrians; but, apart from an alliance with Prussia (1764), the plan came to nothing. Catherine proved wise enough to concentrate on the problems at hand: Poland and Turkey.

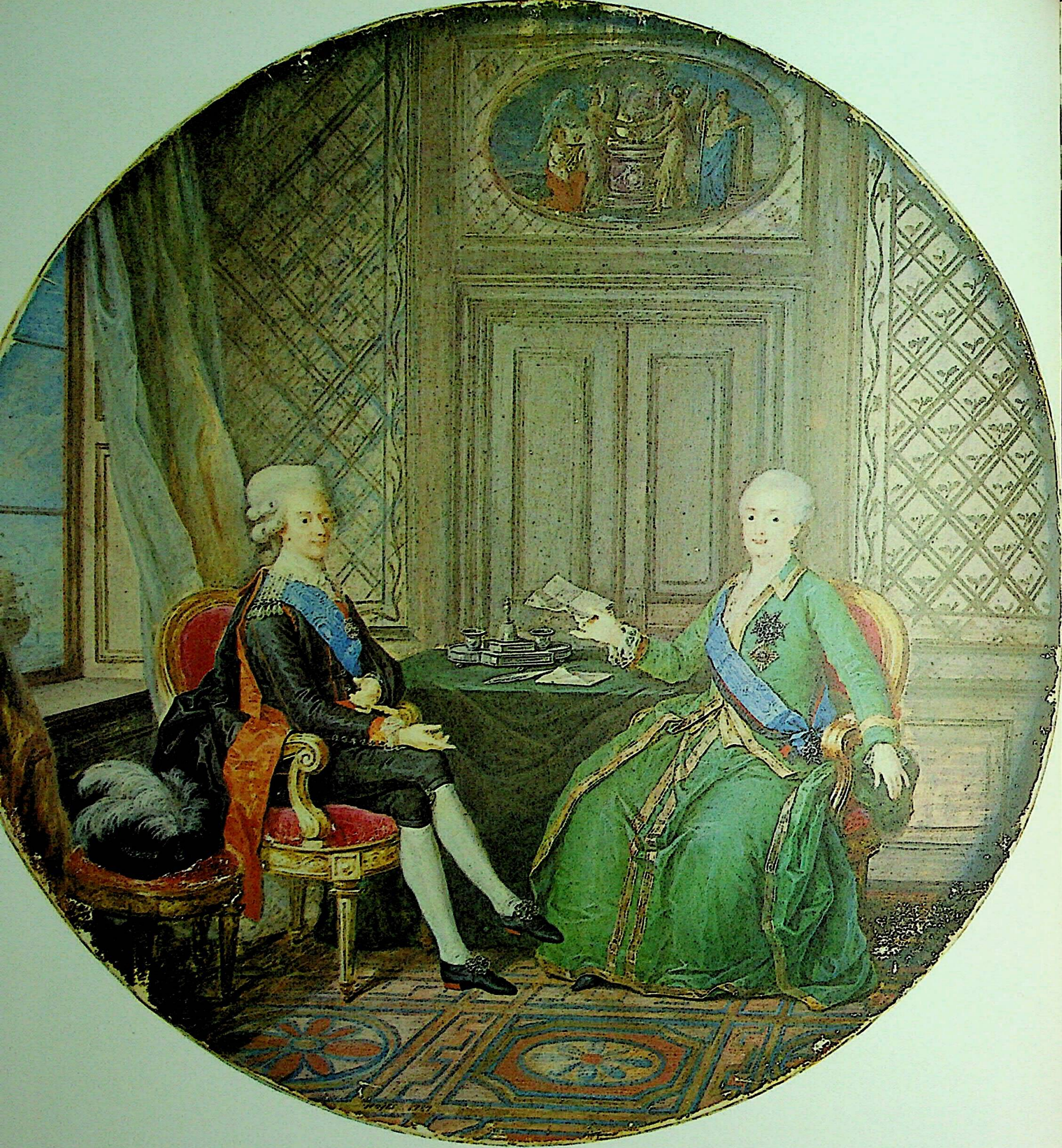
Agreement to 'maintain Polish liberties' was an important motive in the Russo-Prussian alliance; but, in spite of the election of one of Catherine's lovers, Stanislas Poniatowski, as king of Poland, the Poles continued to be troublesome. The activities of the Polish confederacies tied down a large number of Russian troops—a situation made the more serious by the outbreak of war between Russia and Turkey (1768).

Despite Russian commitments in Poland, the war was prosecuted with success. However, Austria was ready to fight rather than see Russia gain territory in the Balkans, while Frederick II—ally or not—was unprepared to back Catherine against Austria but very willing to reconcile all three parties at the expense of Poland. In effect, the first partition of Poland (1772) was Catherine's way of buying off Austria and Prussia, and of compensating herself for the Balkan gains she had been forced to renounce.

The Turkish war was brought to a successful conclusion at Kutchuk-Kainardji (1774), though Catherine might have pressed for greater advantages but for the Pugachev rebellion. Russia acquired a foothold on the Black Sea and right of passage through the Dardanelles for her merchant shipping. The Crimea became independent of Turkey (the first step towards its incorporation into Russia), and Russia gained vaguely worded rights to make representations on behalf of the sultan's Christian subjects. (In the nineteenth century this clause was the pretext for repeated Russian interference in Ottoman affairs.) The treaty of Kutchuk-Kainardji was a landmark in Russian history: under Peter the Great, Russia had gained access to the Baltic; under Catherine she gained access to the Mediterranean.

The second half of the reign was a sort of repeat performance. When the alliance with

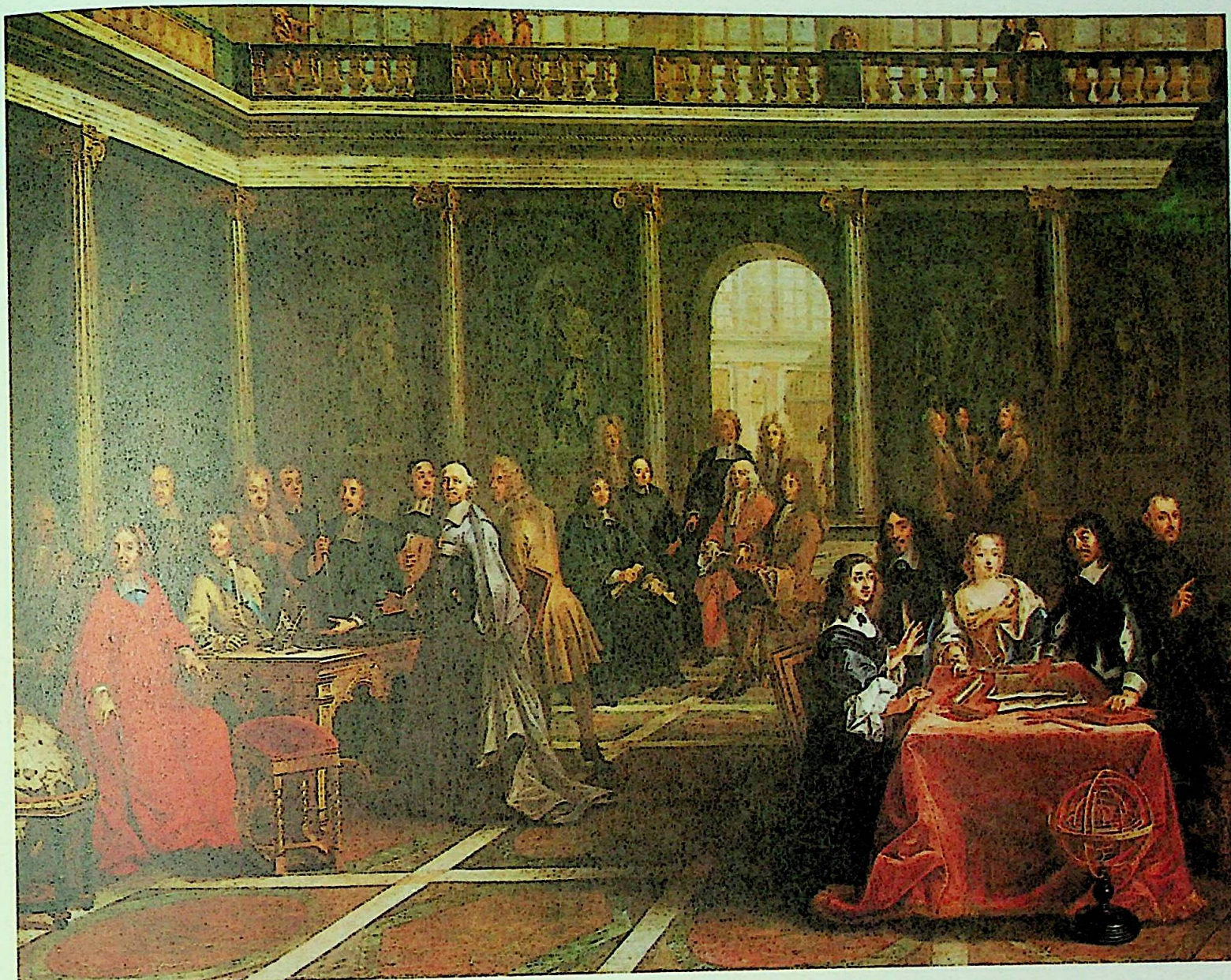




*Catherine the Great and her neighbours. Above: the empress negotiates with Gustavus III, king of Sweden. Painting by C. Hoyer, c. 1791. (Nationalmuseum, Stockholm.)*

*Right: the court of Queen Christina of Sweden (1632–54). The queen (on the right) is supposedly listening to the French philosopher Descartes, who resided at court. Painting by Dumesnil. (Musée de Versailles.)*





Prussia lapsed, Catherine chose a new partner who would be of more direct help against the Turks: Joseph II of Austria. With Joseph's support she annexed the Crimea (1783); but characteristically she made no effort to help Joseph re-establish Austrian supremacy in Germany. On this, as on other occasions, Catherine posed as the arbiter of Europe—a flattering and undemanding role—but refused to commit her forces outside eastern Europe.

In the seventeen-eighties she dreamed of overthrowing the Ottoman Empire completely and re-establishing the ancient Byzantine Empire (the 'Greek project'). In the war that began in 1787, Austria quickly collapsed; and though the Russian performance was better, it hardly justified such extravagant ambitions. At the peace of Jassy (1792) the sultan of Turkey accepted Russia's acquisition of the Crimea and ceded the rest of the northern shore of the Black Sea.

Catherine led the way in destroying the Polish state by the partitions of 1793 and

1795. Her troops did most of the fighting and she took the largest single share. Her partners, Austria and Prussia, were also engaged in the struggle against revolutionary France, in which Catherine had promised her aid. Whether she would have intervened on any scale is debatable: it seems more likely that she would have launched another attack on the Turks. Her death left the question open.

In Russia, the French Revolution was greeted with enthusiasm in some circles, influenced by the Enlightenment culture that Catherine had favoured. But from the fall of the Bastille in July 1789, Catherine herself loathed the Revolution, and any of her remaining pretensions to liberalism disappeared. Russian students in the West were ordered home; the imports of French books and journals—including Catherine's favourites—was prohibited. Novikov, whose *The Drone* had got him into trouble some twenty years before, was imprisoned as a subversive publicist and freemason. Alexander Radishchev, who can be regarded as the first

figure in the great tradition of Russian literature of social conscience, was sent into Siberian exile.

### Catherine's achievement

Catherine's triumphs were bought at a high price. The cost of her wars was enormous, and she financed them by issuing ever greater quantities of paper money. This rapidly depreciated, dislocating the whole Russian economy and wrecking many of the real industrial advances that had taken place. Other negative features—the growth of noble privileges, the deterioration in the lot of the peasantry—have already been noticed.

The positive features were by no means negligible. Russia gained six million new subjects (though not all of them accepted Russification with docility) and vast territories in the south. These were to become the granary of Russia, and made possible the population explosion of the nineteenth century.





ENTRÉE À SMIRNE DE M<sup>OR</sup> LE PRINCE DE LISTENOIS, LIEUTENANT-GÉNÉRAL DES ARMÉES NAVALLES, COMMAN-  
DANT LA FLOTTE DE BAUFFREMONT, APPELÉ LE PRINCE DE LISTENOIS, PLUS TARD VICE-AMIRAL-ÉZ-MERS DU LEVANT, NÉ À  
LA CONSULESSE DE FRANCE AVEC LES DAMES DE LA NATION. — N<sup>o</sup> 2, CINQUANTE GARDES DU MOUSELIN AVEC LE  
D<sup>U</sup> MAIN DU CONSUL. — N<sup>o</sup> 5, DEUX AUDABASCI DU JANISSER-AGHA. — N<sup>o</sup> 6, DOUZE JANISSER MITRÉ DU  
D<sup>U</sup> CONSUL. — N<sup>o</sup> 9, TROIS OFFICIERS DU GRAND DOUANIER, DEUX AVEC L'ENCENT ET L'AUTRE AVEC DE L'ENCENT.  
LA SUITE DES OFFICIERS NÉGOTIANS ET TOUS LES FRANÇOIS. — N<sup>o</sup> 11, LES CAPUCINS, PAROIS-





## The Baltic states

The conclusion of the Great Northern War (1721) marked the end of Sweden's bid for supremacy in the Baltic. Russia took Sweden's territories on the eastern shore of the Baltic, and Prussia acquired western Pomerania. It soon became apparent that they had also replaced Sweden and her old antagonist, Denmark, as great powers; and from the eighteenth century Scandinavia was on the periphery of international affairs.

The situation in the Baltic itself was stabilised. Sweden remained in control of Finland, Denmark of Norway. The Danes accepted the loss of what had become southern Sweden: the Swedes gave up their attempts to conquer Norway and reconciled themselves to paying the Danes customs duties for passage through the Sound. The two powers were comparable in population and resources, and the balance between them lasted the rest of the century.

## Sweden's 'Age of Freedom'

The disasters of Charles XII's reign (1697–1718) had destroyed Sweden's Baltic empire, and with it the justification for absolute royal authority. When Charles died leaving no direct heir, the aristocracy seized their opportunity: the crown was offered to Charles's sister, Ulrica, on condition that she accepted a constitution drawn up by the Swedish Estates. Her agreement initiated what came to be known as 'the Age of Freedom'. The council that ruled Sweden was selected and controlled by the Estates, which met regularly and took decisions by majority vote.

The seventeen-twenties and -thirties were dominated by Count Arvid Horn, whose policy of avoiding foreign adventures while Sweden recovered her strength resembled that of Walpole in Britain and Fleury in France. This unheroic policy led to the formation of the opposing 'Hat' party, which advocated resuming Sweden's traditional alliance with France and dreamed of recovering the lost provinces from Russia.

Horn and the 'Caps' were ousted in 1738; but though the Hats managed to hang on to power until 1765, the period that followed was one of intense party conflict which gave foreign powers unlimited opportunities for interfering in Swedish affairs by intrigue and bribery. The overambitious policy of the Hats led Sweden into war with Russia (1741), from which she was fortunate to escape with only the loss of a strip of Finland, and to join the coalition against Prussia in the Seven Years War, with equally negative results.

*France remained the predominant European influence in Turkey. This picture shows the reception accorded the prince de Listenois at Smyrna, visited by the French fleet on 28 July 1766. (Musée de la Marine, Paris.)*





## Gustavus III

After a brief period of rule by the 'Younger Caps', the twenty-five-year-old Gustavus III (1771–92) staged a coup, overthrew the constitution, and recovered most of the powers that the crown had possessed before the Age of Freedom. He introduced many of the reforms characteristic of the enlightened despot—abolition of judicial torture, religious toleration, freedom of the press, lifting of internal tariffs, etc.

Noble opposition revived in the seventeenth-eighties, provoked in particular by the king's heavy military expenditure, culminating in a fruitless war with Russia and Denmark (1788–90). With popular support Gustavus was able to reinforce and extend his powers by a second coup d'état (1789), but his triumph was brief: in 1792 he was assassinated by a group of nobles.

## Denmark under the Oldenburgs

From the reign of Frederick III (1648–70). Denmark was ruled absolutely by his dynasty, the Oldenburgs. The old nobility was carefully controlled, and royal power was exercised through a new nobility and a civil service, of which many members were Germans who owed everything to the crown. During the eighteenth century, however, a series of weak kings allowed the royal council to engross more and more power—a trend briefly reversed by Johann Friedrich Struensee.

Struensee, a German, was the insane Christian VII's physician and the queen's

lover. In 1770 he became virtual dictator of Denmark, broke the power of the council, and launched a programme of enlightened reforms. The pace at which they were introduced, and above all Struensee's attacks on noble privileges, led to his fall and execution (1772). But not all his measures were cancelled; and a few years later even more important reforms were initiated by Andreas Bernstorff, culminating in the effective abolition of serfdom in 1788.

## Anarchic Poland

Poland failed to overcome her difficulties until it was too late. Under the Saxon kings, Augustus II (1697–1733) and Augustus III (1733–63), economic and social problems went unsolved, and the Sejm was constantly sabotaged by use of the free veto. Foreign intervention became blatant, and the disputatious Poles easily formed the habit of appealing to outsiders. Interested powers—Russia, Prussia, France—corrupted members of the Sejm, decided who should be king, and violated Polish territory with impunity.

The full extent of Poland's weakness became apparent on the death of Augustus II. Stanislas Leszczynski, once Augustus II's rival, was elected by the Poles with enthusiasm. But Leszczynski was also the French candidate; and Austria and Russia had decided that the Saxon line should continue. A Russian army compelled the Poles to change their minds, and drove Leszczynski from the country.

During Augustus III's reign Poland sank deeper into anarchy. Internal politics re-

*Above left: ships and artillery in action: the Russians besiege Ochakov.*

*Above: a group of Janissaries. Engravings. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)*

*Above right: Augustus's rival, Stanislas Leszczynski. Painting by Antoine Pesne. (Charlottenburg Schloss, West Berlin.)*

involved around the struggle between two great families, the Czartoryskis and the Potockis, both of which attempted to form connections with the great powers. During the Seven Years War, Russia used Polish territory as a base from which to attack Prussia, and Prussian troops counter-attacked across the border; while the Poles themselves remained in a state of near civil war.

## Partition

The long overdue reformation began under Stanislas Poniatowski, who became King Stanislas Augustus in 1764. Poniatowski had been one of Catherine II's lovers, and was placed on the throne by Russia and Prussia; but he refused to be a puppet, and had already made some progress towards reform when the first great crisis of his reign occurred.

Religious dissensions in Poland had provided a pretext for Russian and Prussian diplomatic pressure for several decades. Poland was a Catholic state, but contained a large Lutheran minority (mainly German) in the north-east and an even larger Orthodox minority (mainly Ukrainian and Russian) in the east and south-east. Both had very limited civic rights and were subject to





strong Catholic pressure. Their natural defenders were Lutheran Prussia and Orthodox Russia; and Frederick II and Catherine II—both religious sceptics—were quite prepared to exploit the issue.

Catherine first encouraged the 'dissenters' to form confederacies, then (1768) bullied the Sejm into ending their religious disabilities. The reaction was swift: confederacies sprang up all over Poland and harried the Russians, who were further embarrassed by a border incident which sparked off the Russo-Turkish war of 1768–74.

Catherine solved her ensuing difficulties by joining Prussia and Austria in partitioning Poland. In 1772 about a quarter of the kingdom and more than a third of its inhabitants were taken over by new masters.

## Revival and repression

The first partition shocked the Polish nobility out of their complacent absorption in 'Polish liberty'. Encouraged by the king, the Sejm passed a series of measures designed to modernise and strengthen the state, culminating in the constitution of 1791. The crown became hereditary; the free veto and confederacies were abolished; a centralised administration was set up; the system of taxation was revised and made more equitable; and the privileges of the nobility were reduced. Intellectual life quickened under the impact of educational reform, and even the Polish economy, half-strangled by concessions to Prussia and Russia, showed some improvement.

Catherine was less than ever inclined to allow a Polish revival. The constitution of 1791 decided her: in 1792 the conservatives,

who had opposed the constitution, were stirred into activity, and Russian troops again invaded. Poniatowski was forced to agree to a second partition (1793), Russia taking a huge slice of eastern Poland and Prussia a smaller area in the west. All that remained of the ancient kingdom was a small and defenceless state under Russian control.

## Kosciuszko

The disappearance of Poland now seemed only a matter of time. The Polish leaders, partly inspired by the successes of 'the people in arms' during the French Revolution, decided to act before the Russian grip tightened; and in 1794 Poland rose in revolt.

The leader of the rebels was Tadeusz Kosciuszko, an enthusiast for liberty who had already fought in the American War of Independence. Under Kosciuszko the revolt took on something of the nationalist fervour that characterised Polish revolutionary activity throughout the nineteenth century. The peasants, promised their freedom, went into battle with scythes; and against all expectations they defeated the Russians at Raclawice.

Lacking help from outside, the revolt was nevertheless doomed to failure. Prussian troops arrived to support the Russians, and after a few months the redoubtable Suvorov took Warsaw. Kosciuszko was captured and later went into exile.

The failure of this gamble brought about the third partition that the Poles had striven to avoid: in 1795 Russia, Prussia and Austria completed the destruction of the Polish state.

## The Ottoman decline

After 1700 the decay of the Ottoman Empire proceeded with seeming inevitability. The instability of authority at the centre, where seraglio intrigues continued to determine the fate of viziers, or prime ministers, (and sometimes of sultans), encouraged the ambitions of provincial governors and local warlords. In most of north Africa the sultan's authority became merely nominal, and from about 1750 to 1820 there were even semi-independent principalities in the Anatolian heartlands of the empire. The Balkan peoples grew uneasy under Turkish rule, and the Balkan bandit began to take on full heroic stature in legend and folklore.

Cultural and religious conservatism kept the empire backward, and maladministration, political disorder and epidemics made it poor. But what made eighteenth-century Ottoman stagnation more than an episode in the empire's history was the impact of the West, whose technological superiority was increasingly manifested in economic as well as military terms. Western factory products, especially western textiles, crippled the traditional handicraft industries, inhibited





the growth of towns and perpetuated Levantine economic and technical inferiority.

It was hard for the Turks to learn from the West. They were by tradition a military race, and centuries of success in war appeared to justify contempt for commerce, administration, diplomacy and their Christian subjects. Intelligent Turks at least grasped the necessity of military reform: the unintelligent could not grasp even that. Several Turkish rulers attempted to re-fashion the army on western lines, but even the most sustained effort—made under Selim III (1789–1807)—achieved little against the opposition of the Janissaries and the protests of the faithful. Distrust of change had become ingrained.

### The looming 'Eastern Question'

This attitude might have been more difficult to sustain had the empire's international position declined more rapidly; but for

most of the eighteenth century it was maintained with surprising success. The war of 1736–9 against Austria and Russia was, if anything, victorious: Azov was finally lost, but all the Balkan territories ceded at Passarowitz were recovered. Apart from a setback in Transcaucasia, Turkey held her own against her old eastern antagonist, Persia (also beginning to decline); and the long wars in Europe provided her with a breathing-space in the middle decades of the century.

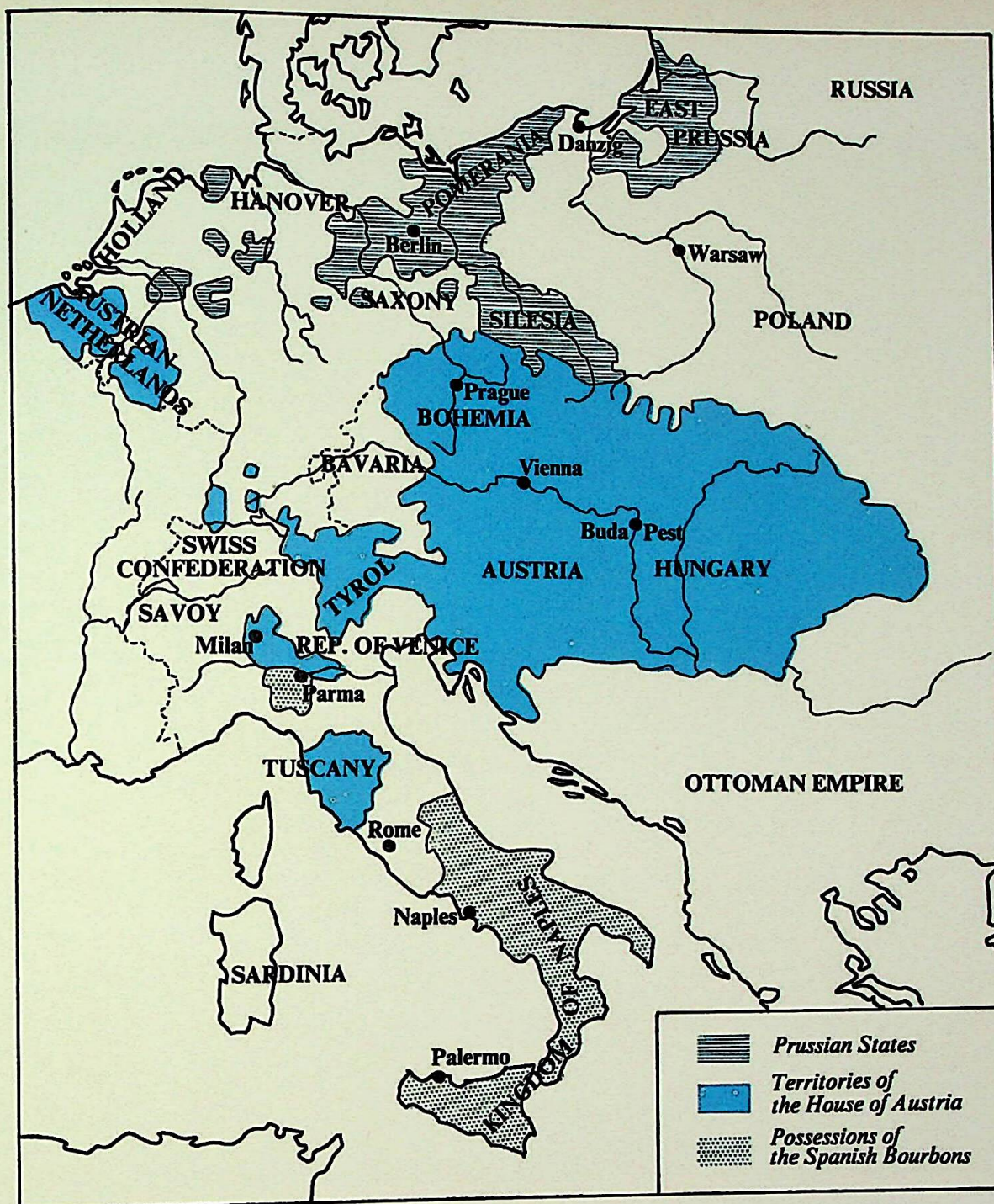
The war of 1768–74, the loss of the Crimea, and the war of 1787–92 revealed the full extent of Turkish weakness. They also revealed that the result of the 1736–9 war had not been fortuitous: Russia had replaced Austria as Turkey's main antagonist and, having occupied the northern shore of the Black Sea, was certain to attempt the penetration of the Balkans.

Two elements of the nineteenth-century 'Eastern Question' were now present in south-eastern Europe: a decadent Turkey

and an aggressive Russia. The diplomatic exertions of France on Turkey's behalf, and Austrian hostility to Russian gains in the Balkans, prefigured the jealousies and anxieties of the other powers, which were to complicate the Russo-Turkish conflict. It required only the eruption of Balkan nationalism in the nineteenth century to create a problem of European magnitude and labyrinthine complexity.

*At the beginning of the eighteenth century the Hohenzollern territories extended in fragments. By mid-century they had control over the Oder; and finally access to the Vistula.*





## War and diplomacy in the eighteenth century

*Dynastic struggles replace religious ones; the Anglo-French alliance decays; War of the Austrian Succession; Franco-Austrian alliance precipitates the Seven Years War; Russia's first venture into European affairs; the Peace of Paris; a precarious balance of powers; beginning of the revolutionary age.*

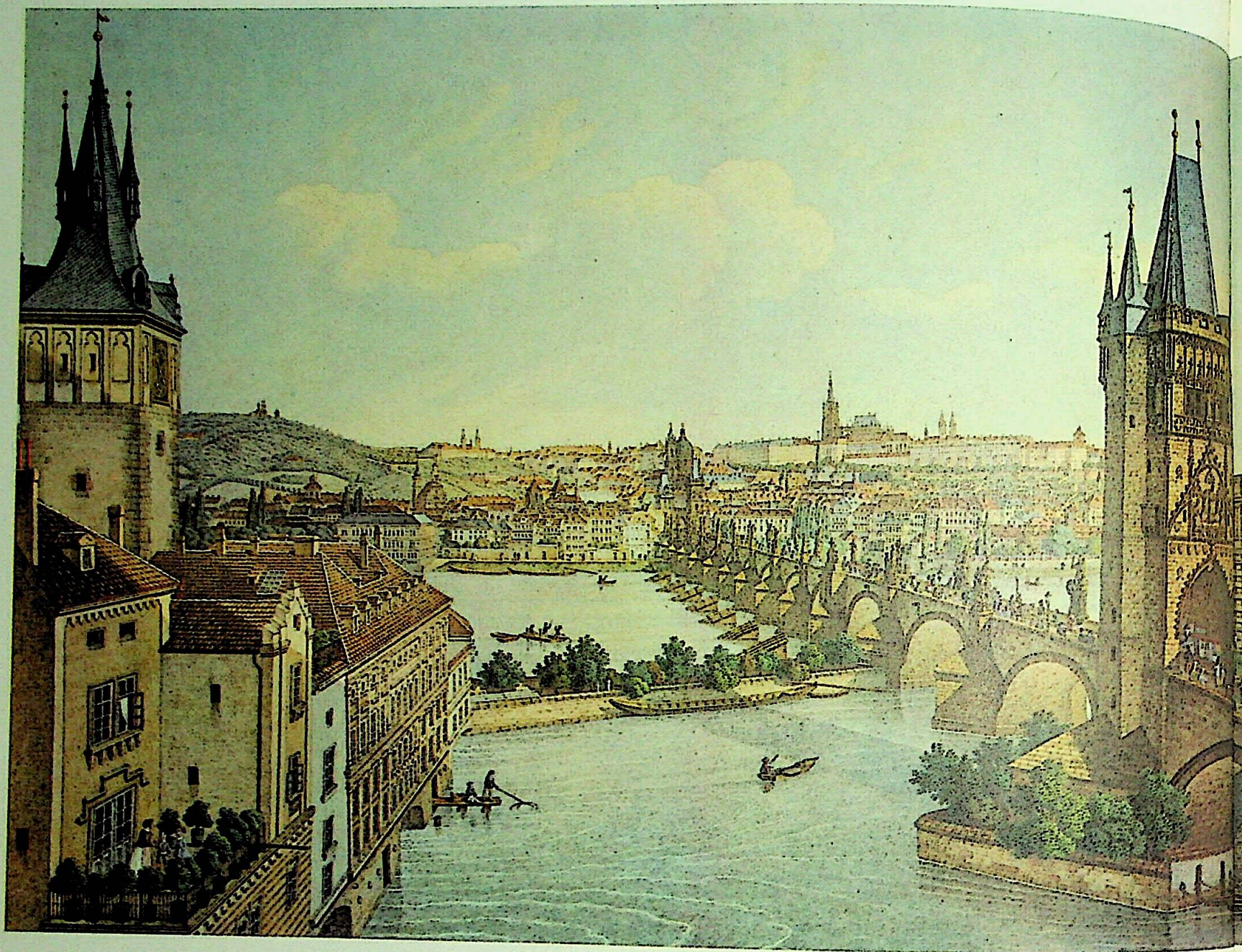
The period between the late seventeenth and late eighteenth centuries was one of diplomacy and warfare conducted without ideological passion. The wars of religious fanaticism had ended; the wars inspired by revolutionary or nationalistic ideologies had not yet begun. Before the French Revolution of 1789, diplomatic activity had a single motive: to advance the interests of the

dynasty or state.

In this sense, eighteenth-century rulers were immoral or (more accurately) amoral. But the politics of self-interest do not necessarily cause more suffering than the politics of religion or idealism; and this was a period when self-interest in fact led to a diminution of the scope and intensity of warfare.

*In the early decades of the eighteenth century Italy provided a battle ground where France, England and the emperor resisted the attempts of Spain to restore its sovereignty. Bohemia, as the borderland between Prussia and Austria suffered acutely in the great wars of the century. By 1771 Poland had become the great prize to be divided between Prussia, Russia and Austria.*





*Sectors in the War of Austrian Succession. The famous Charles Bridge, Prague (above), by Morstadt. The Austrians recapture Prague from the French (1742) (below right), by an anonymous painter. (Heeresgeschichtliches Museum, Vienna.) Far right: the battle of Raucoux (1746), one of Maurice de Saxe's victories in the Austrian Netherlands. Painting by Van Blarenberghe. (Musée de Versailles.)*





## The art of war

Most eighteenth-century wars were fought without antagonism and for limited objectives. The aggressor hoped to win a province; and if he was defeated he expected to pay with one. Monarchs respected one another's property, if only to avoid retaliation: towns were no longer sacked and soldiers were forbidden to loot and pillage. War became conventionalised—an occupation for professionals which for much of the time did not affect civilians. Trade between belligerents might well continue without interruption, and a gentleman could travel freely in a state with which his own was at war.

The bulk of almost every army was drawn from the dregs of the population, bribed or bullied into the ranks by recruiting sergeants. There were usually also large contingents of foreign mercenaries or soldiers conscripted in occupied territories. Such troops had to be endlessly drilled and savagely disciplined until they were more afraid of their officers than of the enemy. Naturally, when they got the chance, many of them deserted.

Desertion was a major problem for commanders, whose need to constantly supervise their own troops limited the striking power of their armies. Soldiers liable to desert could not be sent out in scouting parties, so information was inadequate. They could be deployed only in open country, so that freedom of manoeuvre was restricted and the line of advance irregular. Armies operating *en bloc* had to be supplied from large war magazines, and could not easily sustain long campaigns at a distance from their base area. Finally, large baggage-trains and poor communications further impeded rapidity of movement.

Even the greatest eighteenth-century commanders—Marlborough and Frederick the Great—only partly transcended these limitations. Decisive victories of the Napoleonic type, in which a mass national army penetrated deep into enemy territory, lived off the land, and destroyed the opposing army with a single knockout blow, were unthinkable. Most wars involved long sieges, prolonged manoeuvring, set-piece battles and inefficient pursuit of a defeated enemy. In western Europe, defensive tactics were highly developed, and only minimal advantages were sought. Peace was generally made when one or both of the contestants were financially exhausted rather than defeated.

## Diplomatic realities and illusions

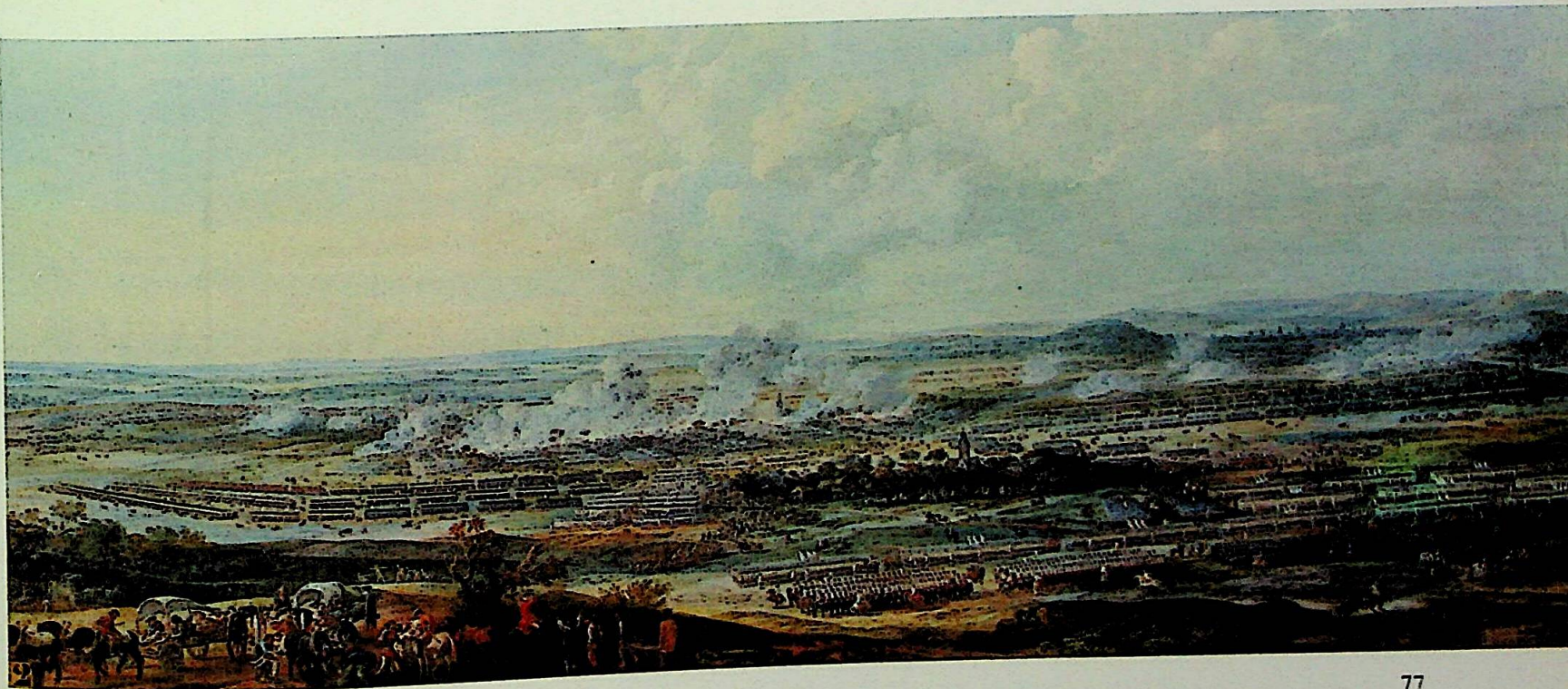
Such conditions necessarily imposed limited aims: but statesmen did not always think so. The eighteenth century was a period of overelaborate and sometimes fantastic schemes: the improbable combination of Swedes, Jacobites and Spaniards projected by Charles XII's minister Goertz, the plans for dismembering France entertained by the Spanish queen, Elizabeth Farnese, and Charles VI of Austria, Panin's northern alliance, and Catherine's 'Greek project'.

In part, the prevalence of diplomatic fantasies resulted from uncertainty about the direction which European affairs were taking. Until the early decades of the eighteenth century, certain constant diplomatic factors had guided generations of rulers. The conflict between France and the Habsburgs had polarised European diplomacy for two centuries, offering other states the clear alternative of joining one side or

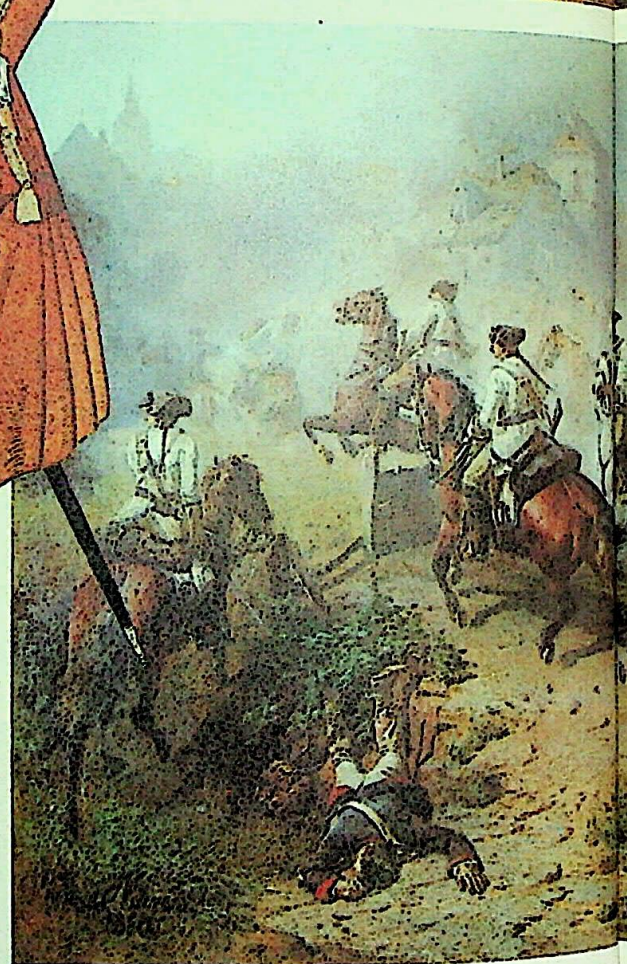
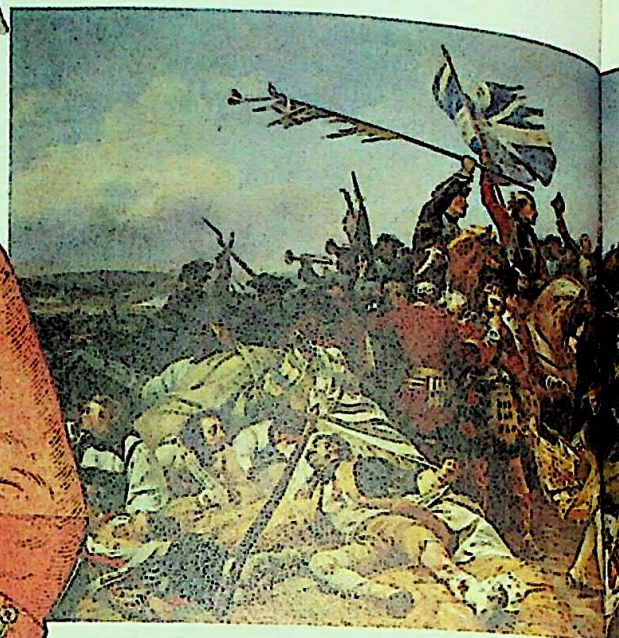
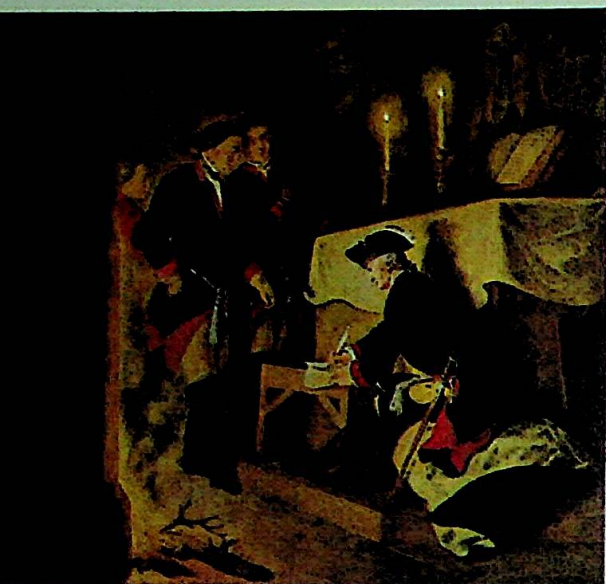
the other: and in eastern Europe, the struggle against the enemy of Christendom, Ottoman Turkey, was still older. Even the Swedish attempt to dominate the Baltic (and perhaps central and eastern Europe) dated back to the sixteen-forties.

By 1713 the familiar patterns had begun to disappear. France, exhausted by Louis XIV's wars and ruled in turn by a pacific regent, a pacific minister and a feeble king (Louis XV), ceased to dominate Europe. With Spain no longer ruled by a Habsburg, and imperial power negligible, Austria became a mainly east-European power. The liberation of Hungary ended the Muslim threat to Christendom, and Turkey became more or less another member of the European state system. And at the battle of Poltava (1709), Sweden was once and for all destroyed as a great power by the armies of Peter the Great. The traditional alliances were no longer satisfactory, though it was more than half a century before they were abandoned. For at least a generation, Austria, Britain and Holland had combined to resist France, whose traditional allies were Sweden, Turkey and Poland. By 1748 it had become apparent that the Dutch, like the Swedes and Turks, were no longer a force in Europe: while Britain and France were increasingly absorbed in a struggle for empire outside Europe. Even more important was the rise of two new states: Prussia, which rivalled Austria for primacy in Germany, and Russia, which established a virtual protectorate over France's old dependant, Poland.

The Franco-Austrian rapprochement of 1756 was the first drastic realignment prompted by the changed balance of forces. It was the prelude to an even greater change: the division of Europe into separate diplo-







matic spheres: the west, where Britain, France and Spain fought intermittently for colonies; and the east, where Russia, Prussia and Austria manoeuvred or combined to decide the fate of their weaker neighbours. Europe was to become a single theatre of diplomacy and war only with the French Revolution and its Napoleonic sequel.

In the sections which follow, the alliances and conflicts of the eighteenth century are described mainly in terms of their European significance. For the policies of individual states the reader is referred to the relevant sections of this volume and (for the maritime powers and the colonial struggle) to the previous volume in this series.

## The Peace of Utrecht

The War of the Spanish Succession (1701–13) was effectively ended by the Peace of Utrecht (1713). Its chief results were that France, though almost brought to her knees in the last years of the war, secured the Spanish throne for Louis XIV's grandson, who became Philip V; and that Spain lost all her European possessions, most of which were taken over by Austria. Thus Spain passed from the Habsburg family to the Bourbons, and Austria became the paramount power in Italy as well as acquiring the Spanish Netherlands. The duke of Savoy gained Sicily and some territory in mainland Italy; and various other provisions were made to contain France and reward members of the anti-French coalition. Britain's gains were mainly colonial, but her retention of Gibraltar and Minorca





*Far left: Frederick II after his victory over the Austrians at Torgau (1760). Painting by Bernhard Rhode. (Charlottenburg Schloss, West Berlin.)*

*Left: Louis XV of France. (Musée Carnavalet, Paris.)*

*Above centre: the battle of Fontenoy (1745). Painting by Horace Vernet. (Musée de Versailles.)*

*Below centre: the cuirassiers of General Seydlitz in the Seven Years War. Painting by Hans von Mares. (Charlottenburg Schloss, West Berlin.)*

*Right: Maurice de Saxe at the battle of Laufeldt (1747), another of his victories. Painting by Auguste Conder. (Musée de Versailles.)*



increased her power in the Mediterranean and ensured future conflicts with Spain.

## Peace-making and peace-keeping

In 1716 the Austrian armies under Eugene began a war against the Turks that culminated in the victorious peace of Passarowitz (1718). The most important event of 1716 was, however, the Anglo-French alliance, to which the Dutch also adhered (1717). Neither Britain's new Hanoverian king nor France's regent was entirely secure; and both countries were war-weary. They had a shared interest in maintaining European peace.

It was partly Anglo-French diplomacy that brought the Great Northern War (1700–21) to an end, though it did little to affect its outcome: Sweden ceded her eastern Baltic possessions to Russia, and fell from the ranks of the great powers; Russia, as later became apparent, joined them.

Before the pacification of the Baltic had been completed, the western Mediterranean became the potential centre of a new European war. Under the direction of Elizabeth Farnese and her adviser, Alberoni, Spain attacked and captured Sardinia (1717) and Sicily (1718). The powers reacted swiftly. The emperor adhered to the British-French-Dutch system (Quadruple Alliance, 1718); and a few days later a British fleet defeated the Spaniards off Cape Pessaro. Philip was compelled to make terms by a French invasion of Spain (1719). The immediate (and irrelevant) result of the crisis was that

the duke of Savoy was compelled to cede Sicily to the emperor in return for the poorer island of Sardinia, of which he became king. The self-imposed peace-keeping mission of France, Britain and Holland appeared to have succeeded.

## Alarums and excursions

In fact, nothing had been solved. Spain, fobbed off with promises of territory in Italy for Elizabeth Farnese's sons, remained dissatisfied. Charles VI of Austria, resenting his dependence on the maritime powers, attempted to get a share in overseas trade for Austria through his Ostend Company (1722). In 1725 Spain and Austria became allies—the outstanding geopolitical absurdity of a period marked by half-hearted attempts to adjust to changed conditions. Faced by a British-French-Prussian combination, Austria backed down. Spain fought a brief war against Britain (1727), unsuccessfully besieging Gibraltar, until French diplomatic pressure forced her to make peace. By the treaties of Seville (1729) and Vienna (1731), Elizabeth Farnese's son Charles became duke of Parma and was recognised as heir to Tuscany. Charles VI abandoned the Ostend Company and collected British and Dutch guarantees of the Pragmatic Sanction, which had now become his chief diplomatic aim. The ultimate success of Spanish policy demonstrated that, in a period when the great powers were concerned to preserve peace, a second-class power could exploit its nuisance-value to make limited gains.

In the seventeen-twenties and -thirties





British policy was directed by Walpole and French policy by Cardinal Fleury, men of similarly pacific outlook. While they remained in control, Anglo-French relations remained good, though in the decade after 1731 Britain played little part in European affairs. The French war party, on the other hand, dragged the reluctant Fleury into yet another round of the Bourbon-Habsburg conflict.

## War of the Polish Succession

'War of the Polish Succession' is a misnomer for the conflict of 1733-5. France had no serious chance of opposing the Austro-Russian candidate, Augustus III; and she embarked on what was primarily a war against Austria in order to compensate herself for loss of influence in Poland.

The French overran Lorraine, but Italy, where France, Spain and Sardinia fought in alliance, was again the chief theatre of war. The Austrian armies suffered several defeats, and the peace terms were unfavourable to the Habsburgs. Stanislas Leszczynski, the unsuccessful French candidate for the Polish throne (and Louis XV's father-in-law), received Lorraine, which was to become French territory at his death; Francis of Lorraine, Maria Theresa's husband-to-be, received Tuscany in compensation. Charles VI received Parma; Charles of Parma became ruler of Naples and Sicily. One major objective of Habsburg policy was achieved: France joined the other great powers in guaranteeing the Pragmatic Sanction.

The war was important for several reasons. Russia supplanted France in



Poland; and in the virtual acquisition of Lorraine the French monarchy won its last great triumph before the Revolution. Franco-Spanish co-operation began an enduring partnership that was geographically and dynastically appropriate—and, incidentally, the first permanent feature in European diplomacy since Utrecht. And the situation in Italy was stabilised: henceforward the south was to be ruled by a Bourbon dynasty and most of the north by Habsburgs. This arrangement too was sound, and lasted without material alteration until the second half of the nineteenth century.



*Far left: Maurice de Saxe, the last great French general of the Old Regime. Painting attributed to Liotard. (Musée de l'Armée, Paris.)*

*Above left: a trumpeter; from Collection des uniformes et des évolutions militaires des troupes françaises. (Ministry of War, Paris.)*

*Above and right: drummer, naval grenadier and sea-captain. Gouaches. (Musée de la Marine, Paris.)*

*Far right: a German inn: the recruiting officer about to claim another victim. Painting by Karl Gaspar Pitz, eighteenth century. (Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Munich.)*





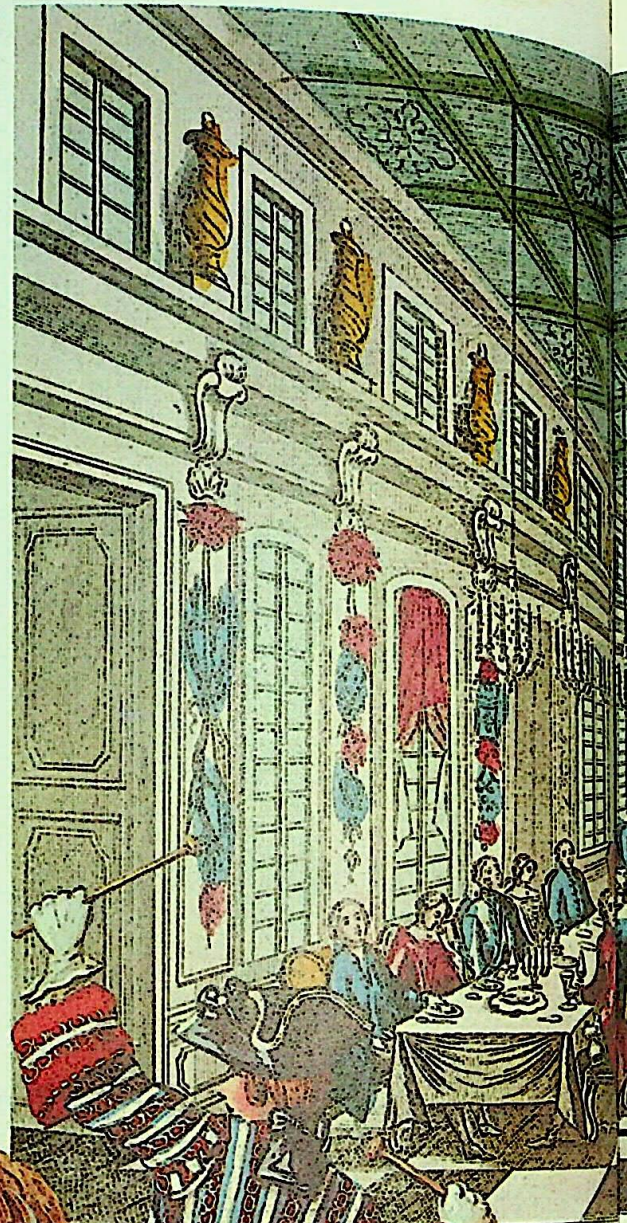
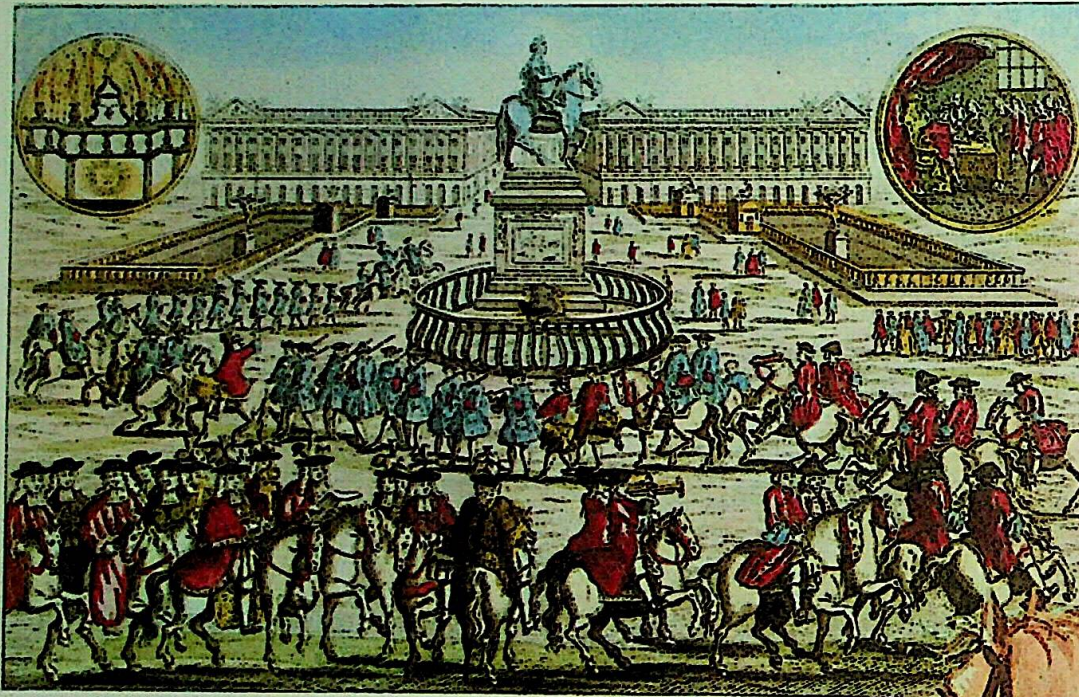
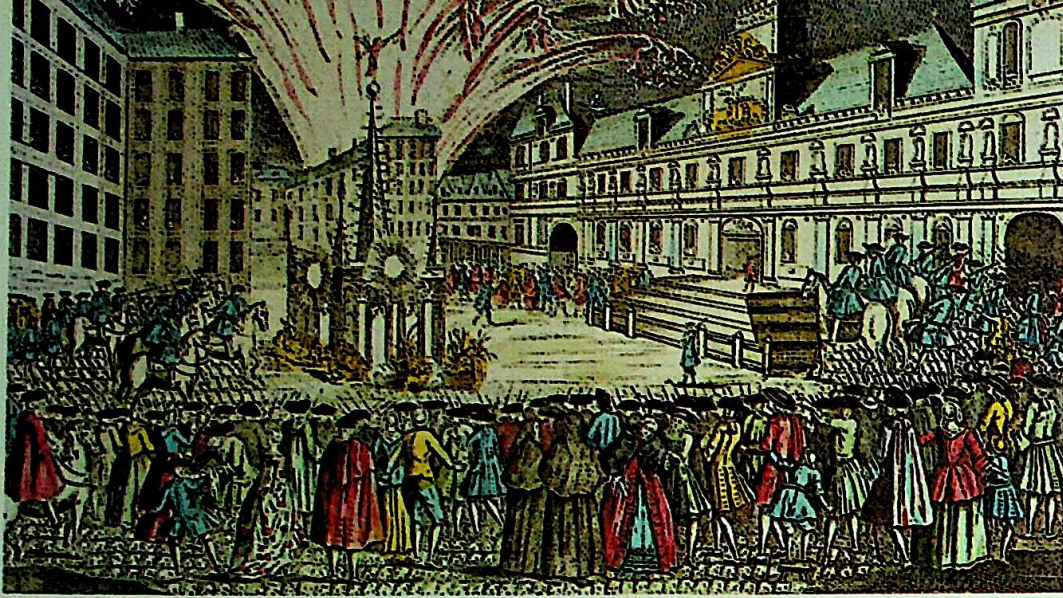
## War of the Austrian Succession

In the Turkish war of 1736–9 Austria lost all the territory outside Hungary that she had gained at Passarowitz, whereas her Russian ally was at least nominally victorious. The most serious aspect of this reverse was that Austrian weakness was revealed at a moment of dynastic crisis. The accession of Maria Theresa, Frederick the Great's invasion of Silesia, the invasion of Bohemia by a 'Bavarian' (in fact Franco-Bavarian) army, and Spanish attacks on Habsburg possessions in Italy, seemed to prefigure the disintegration of the empire. Austria's only ally, Russia, was paralysed by the crisis attendant on Elizabeth's accession and the simultaneous Russo-Swedish war. Even the German imperial crown was lost, for in January 1742 Charles Albert of Bavaria was elected Holy Roman emperor—the first non-Habsburg since 1438.

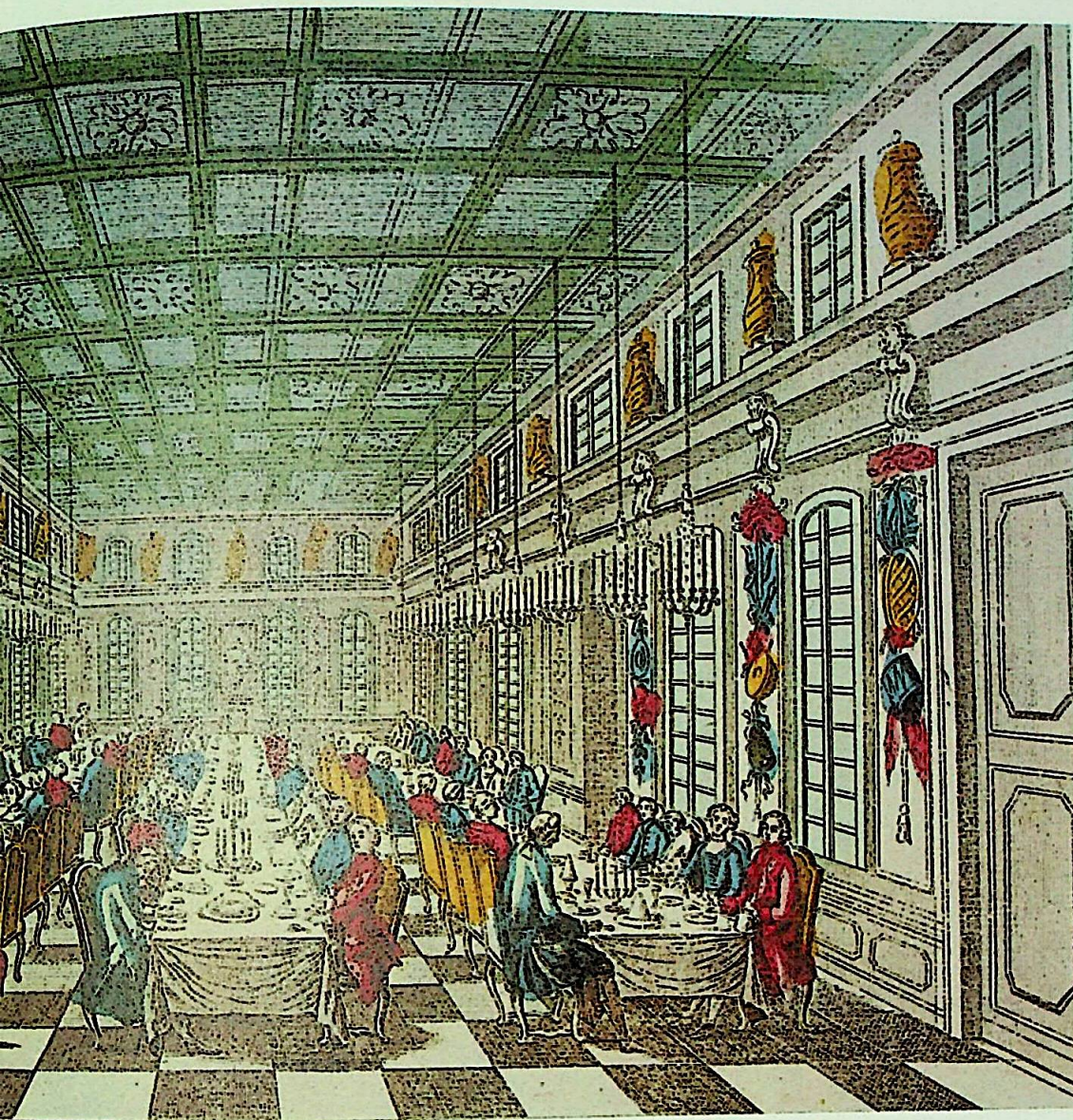
Then Austrian fortunes revived. Frederick the Great agreed to a brief truce (October 1741) which enabled him to occupy the rest of Silesia while the Austrian army rallied to defend Bohemia. Britain helped Maria Theresa with subsidies and began to form an auxiliary 'Pragmatic army'. In 1742 Prussia inflicted heavy defeats on Austria, but made peace in return for Silesia; while the French and Bavarians were driven from Bohemia with heavy losses, and Bavaria was occupied by Austrian troops.

In real terms this ended the War of the Austrian Succession. The Austrian monarchy was saved and Silesia lost; and what followed was a futile European war on the old pattern. Ties between Britain and Austria were strengthened, and in 1743 the









*The Peace of Paris (1763), virtually ending the Seven Years War, was greeted with joy in France, where the effects of the English blockade had caused some hardship.*

*Far left: firework display in front of the Hôtel de Ville and a ceremonial cavalcade; (below) a banquet. (Musée Carnavalet, Paris.)*

*Bottom: drummer of the Burgundian Company. (Ministry of War, Paris.)*

France. The French were sympathetic towards the idea of an understanding that would leave them free to concentrate on the unfolding colonial struggle against Britain, but for that very reason unwilling to participate in an Austro-Russian attack on Prussia.

Agreement was precipitated by a series of misunderstandings and miscalculations. A subsidy treaty between Britain and Russia (1755) convinced Frederick II that he should himself reach an accommodation with Britain. By the Convention of Westminster (January 1756) Prussia and Britain agreed to neutralise Germany: foreign troops were to be kept out and peace maintained. Frederick protested that the Convention did not affect the Franco-Prussian alliance, but Louis XV and his ministers regarded Frederick's action as the blackest treachery. Elizabeth of Russia, who had viewed the treaty of 1755 as a preliminary to attacking Prussia, was equally angry with Britain, and egged on Austria to bring France into an anti-Prussian coalition. As a result, France hurriedly concluded the first treaty of Versailles with Austria (May 1756). The diplomatic revolution had taken place.

The treaty was only a defensive one, however: each party agreed to help the other if attacked in Europe—a provision that kept Austria out of the Anglo-French colonial war, which had already begun (1755), but gave France the continental security she needed in order to win it. That, at least, was France's position in May 1756. Whether Austria could have tempted her into an aggressive war against Prussia remains in doubt; for Frederick, obsessed by the spectre of a French-Austrian-Russian coalition, determined to launch a preventive war. His attack on Saxony activated the defensive alliance between France and Austria, and brought into being the coalition that he dreaded.

## The Seven Years War

The central drama of the Seven Years War in Europe was Prussia's fight to survive against the armies of Austria, Russia, Sweden and the German states, which has been sketched out in the section describing Frederick the Great's career. There were a number of reasons for the failure of the anti-Prussian coalition: Frederick's meticulous preparation, military genius, ruthlessness, resourcefulness and luck; suspicion

Pragmatic army under George II defeated the French at Dettingen. In 1744 France declared war on Britain, entering the Anglo-Spanish colonial war that had been in progress since 1739. She also declared war officially on Austria and invaded the Austrian Netherlands. Frederick the Great, alarmed by Austrian successes, re-entered the war (1744–5) long enough to obstruct an Austrian invasion of France, and then left it for good, still holding Silesia. In 1745 the French, under Maurice de Saxe, won the great battle of Fontenoy over the British. Austrians and Dutch, and in the next two years overran the Austrian Netherlands and part of Holland. Fontenoy was to be the military counterpart of the acquisition of Lorraine—the last great victory of pre-Revolutionary French arms; but for the moment it seemed as if France was again 'the great nation' in Europe.

Faction and financial difficulties hampered the diplomatic exploitation of French victories; and France, like most of the other combatants, lacked intelligible war aims. When peace was at last made, at Aix-la-Chapelle (1748), it was on the basis of a

restoration of all conquests, European or colonial. The imperial crown had already returned to Habsburg control with the election of Francis of Lorraine as Holy Roman emperor (1745). The only gainers at the peace were Elizabeth Farnese's second son, Philip, who became duke of Parma, and the king of Sardinia, who was rewarded with territory for helping Maria Theresa.

All the same, the war registered important changes in the European situation. The Dutch were clearly no longer a great power. The emergence of Prussia signified that European wars would never again assume the aspect of straightforward Austro-French struggles for supremacy in Germany. Finally, the renewal of Anglo-French antagonism, based on commercial and colonial rivalry, became a permanent feature of European diplomacy until the end of the Napoleonic Wars.

## 'The diplomatic revolution'

The decisive break with diplomatic tradition was made by Kaunitz, who initiated negotiations for an Austrian alliance with



and lack of coordination between his enemies: the Austrian preference for titles rather than talent in commanders; Russian slowness in mobilising and intervening (1758); and, possibly decisive, the change of ruler that took Russia out of the war in 1762.

It is unlikely that Frederick could have survived until 1762 if France had been able to add her weight to the coalition. In this respect Frederick's British alliance proved invaluable. Under the elder William Pitt, Britain subsidised Frederick and undertook a holding operation in western Europe. From the British point of view the object was to frustrate a French victory in Europe and thereby prevent France from concentrating her resources on the colonial struggle. In pursuance of this policy, regular naval-cum-military attacks were made on the French coast: but Frederick's real protection was the mixed army of British, Hanoverian and hired German troops maintained by Britain in western Germany. After his victory at Rossbach (1757) Frederick never had to face a French army: the French were contained and even defeated at Crefeld (1758) and Minden (1759) by the Anglo-German force under Ferdinand of Brunswick.

British policy was triumphantly successful. By 1759 France was compelled to reduce her subsidies and other commitments to Austria; while British naval and colonial victories multiplied. The 'Family Compact' between France and Spain led to Spain's entry into the war against Britain (1762), but failed to shake British maritime supremacy. The war overseas was ended by the Peace of Paris (1763), and French withdrawal from the European war, following upon that of Russia, left Austria no alternative but to make peace with Prussia at Hubertusburg (1763). Britain's colonial gains were substantial; continental Europe, after seven years of exhausting struggle, remained as it had been before the war.

## Two diplomacies

After 1763, France remained in close alliance with Spain and more loosely connected with Austria; but she carefully avoided continental entanglements. Lorraine became French in 1766, and France bought a rebellious Corsica from Genoa in 1768; for the rest, she bided her time until she could revenge herself on Britain. Britain, shunned by Frederick, was unable to find a continental partner. Though they were not always fully conscious of the fact, the western European powers had few interests and no influence in central and eastern Europe.

Russia, Prussia and Austria were equally pre-occupied. The Prusso-Russian alliance (1764) operated to maintain the Polish and Swedish constitutions until the question of the dissenters embroiled Russia in Poland and led her into war with Turkey. While Gustavus III seized the opportunity to re-

establish absolutism in Sweden, Austrian hostility forced Russia to forego gains in the Balkans and, with the connivance of Frederick the Great, led on to a three-way reconciliation based on the partition of Poland (1772). Russia was left free to make a highly advantageous peace with the Turks at Kutchuk-Kainardji (1774).

In the west, the American War of Independence (1775-83) enabled France and Spain, at last unhindered by continental commitments, to take their revenge on Britain. The thirteen colonies became independent, and Britain ceded some of her colonies to France and Spain. In Europe, the British navy was defeated in the Mediterranean and Minorca was lost; but a Franco-Spanish force failed to capture Gibraltar. The other powers were not involved, though Catherine II organised the League of Armed Neutrality (1780) to oppose the British practice of searching neutral vessels on the high seas.

The resurrection of Austrian ambitions in central Europe prompted France to diplomatic if not military activity. Austrian claims to Bavaria provoked a brief and half-hearted Austro-Prussian war (1778-9), and aroused the hostility of France, which had no wish to see the Austrian border expand westwards. Completely isolated, Austria was forced to back down.

Joseph II continued the Austrian forward policy and, since Prussian hostility was inevitable and French friendship had been found wanting, allied with Russia (1781). But whereas Joseph wanted Russian backing in central Europe, Catherine viewed Austria as an ally against the Turks. Catherine got the best of the bargain: Austrian diplomatic pressure enabled Russia to annex the Crimea without difficulty (1783), but Russian help for Austria never went beyond verbal support. Joseph failed to compel Dutch agreement to the opening of the Scheldt, and was equally unsuccessful in his scheme to exchange the Austrian Netherlands for Bavaria. France opposed both schemes, and Frederick the Great was able to crown his career by organising a League of German Princes (1785) which effectively quashed the Bavarian project.

## Into the age of revolutions

In the late seventeen-eighties two of the great powers were in a state of collapse. France was paralysed by the chronic financial difficulties of the crown and the violent opposition of the privileged classes to any kind of reform. Austria by military disaster against the Turks and rebellions in Hungary and the Austrian Netherlands.

The other powers took surprisingly little advantage of this situation, though Prussia, backed by Britain, did break the pro-French party in Holland (1787), which then joined a Prusso-British alliance (1788). Surprisingly,

Prussia let slip the opportunity of crippling or even destroying Austria, and Leopold II was able to make peace with the Turks and put his house in order.

Russia brought her war with the Turks (1787-92) to a victorious conclusion, despite a Swedish declaration of war. The hostility of other powers towards the Russian advance proved ineffective. Britain's prime minister, the younger Pitt, protested at the Russian seizure of Ochakov, thought about sending an ultimatum, and then changed his mind. Eastern Europe remained the preserve of Russia, Prussia and Austria, with Russia very much the leader.

This was confirmed by the second and third partitions of Poland, the most enduring effect of which was to make the three great eastern powers partners in crime. Whatever their differences, they had a shared interest in holding down the Poles. The post-Napoleonic Holy Alliance was already prefigured, and was to last in one form or another until the late nineteenth century. So, as we have seen, was the Eastern Question, posed by the decline of Turkey.

Elsewhere in Europe, diplomacy was dominated by a new phenomenon—the French Revolution, which ushered in a new age of ideological conflicts, created new diplomatic patterns and, in power-political terms, enabled France to reorganise her resources and resume her primacy in Europe. That, however, is the main subject of volume fourteen in this series.

*Right: the Doge 'marrying' the sea, an Ascension ceremony symbolising a Venetian supremacy that had passed away. Painting by Guardi. (Musée du Louvre, Paris.)*





# The western Mediterranean

*Italy divided by Habsburg and Bourbon territories; hostility between the Catholic kings and the papacy; Spain—revival and reform under the Bourbons; stagnation and corruption in Portugal.*

## Fragmentation and regionalism

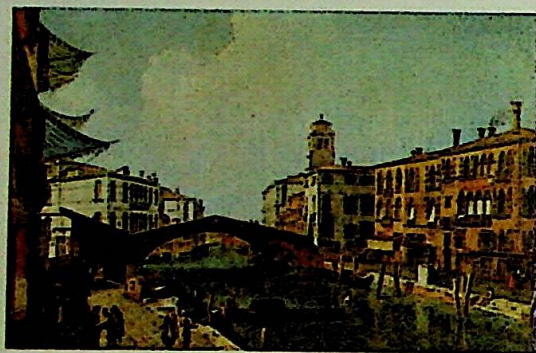
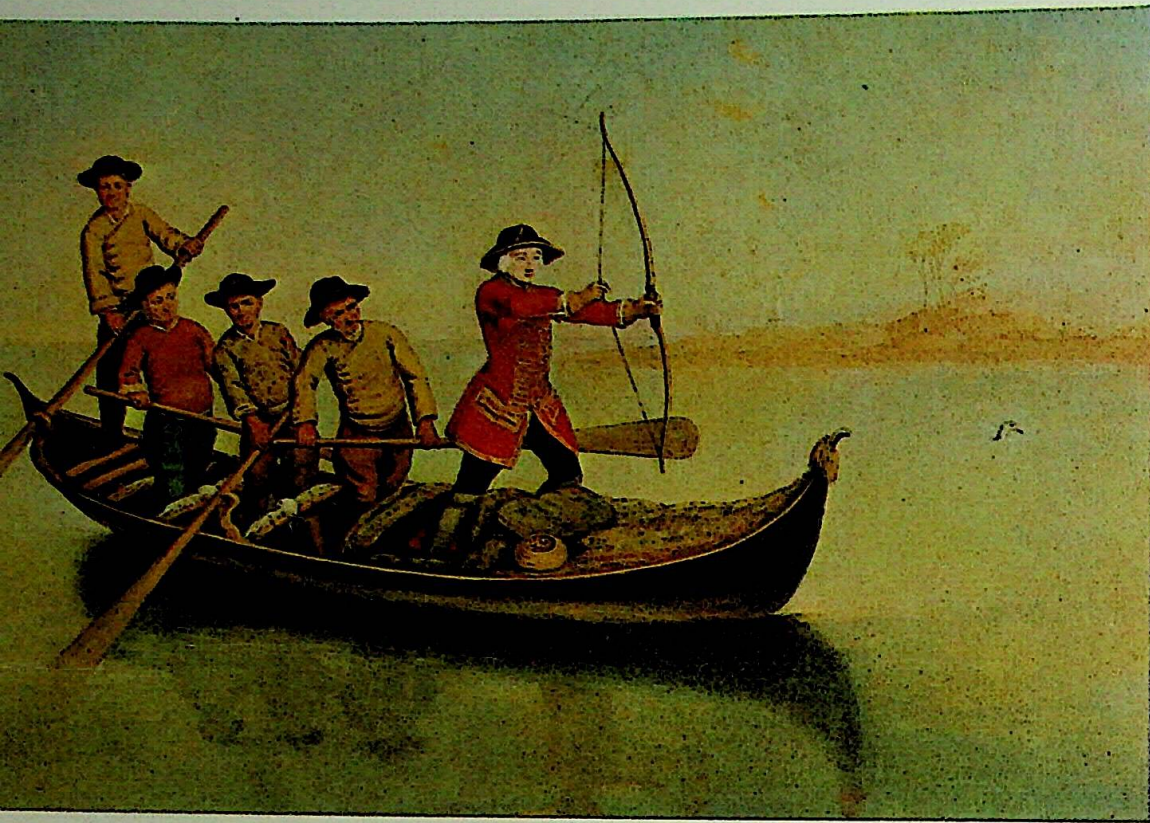
The treaties which ended the War of Spanish Succession changed the western Mediterranean in two important respects: Spain lost her predominant position in Italy to the Austrian Habsburgs, and Britain became a Mediterranean power through her acquisition of Gibraltar and Minorca. The partial re-establishment of Spanish influence in Italy (1715–48) marked the end of territorial

instability, since it was followed by alliances between all the great Mediterranean land powers (Spain, France, Austria). War at sea, where Britain was opposed by France and Spain, continued throughout the period, but its effects on the Mediterranean lands were slight.

Stability provided an opportunity for reform, and several more or less enlightened despots duly appeared. They had to combat peculiar difficulties: the fragmentation of the Italian peninsula into numerous small

states; regionalism in Italy and Spain, created by geography and history; the numbers, wealth and privileges of the clergy in the traditionally devout Mediterranean lands; and psychological and economic inertia, induced in Spaniards and Portuguese by recently vanished greatness and long dependence on silver and gold from colonies in the Americas.





*Scenes of Venetian life.  
Above: duck-hunting on a lagoon; painting  
by Longhi (Querini Stampalia, Venice.)  
The small painting by Marieschi is of the  
Church of S. Geremia and Palazzo Labia.  
(Frederick the Great's Collection,  
Charlottenburg Schloss, West Berlin.)*



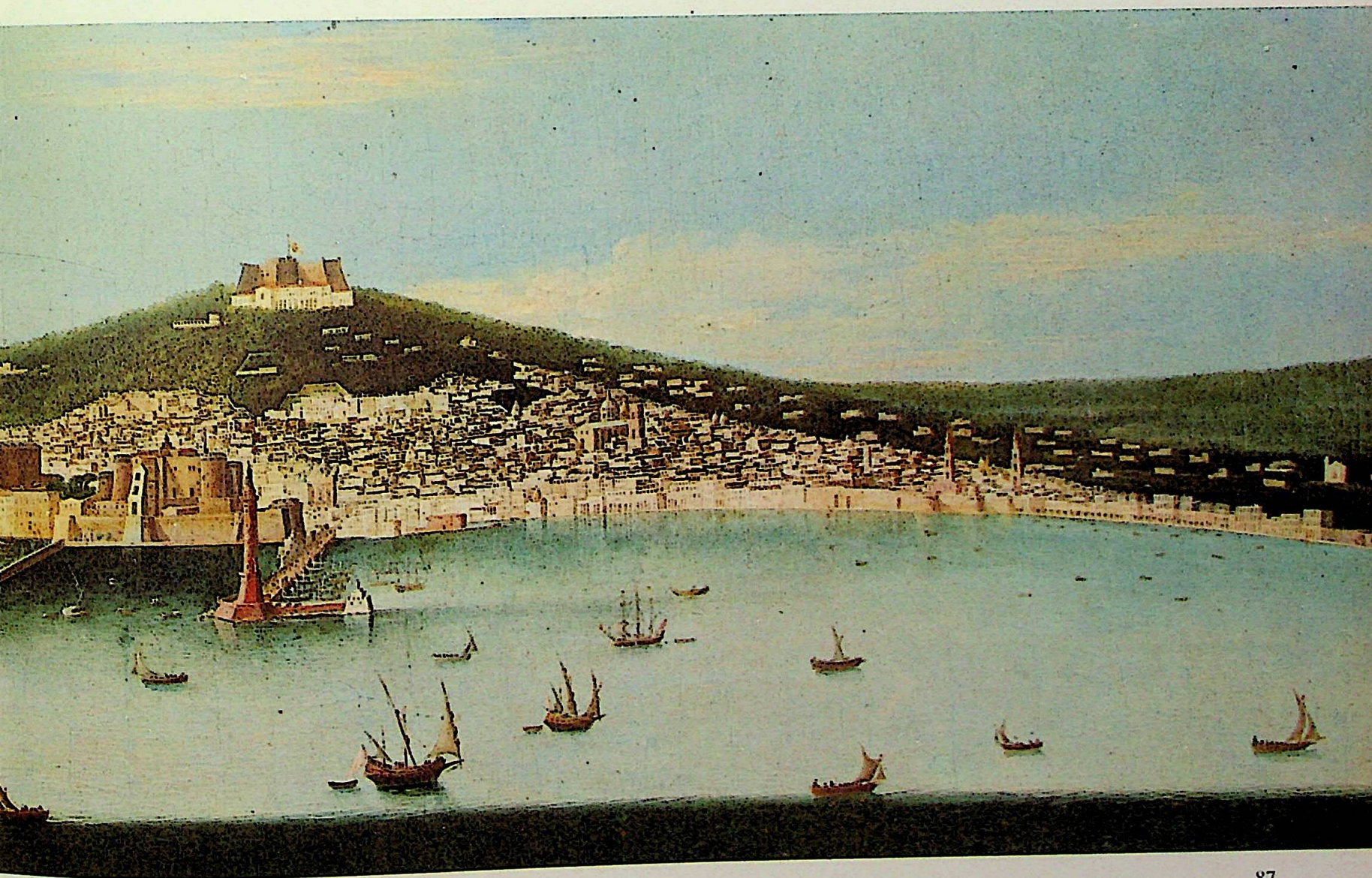


*The artistic, historical and natural splendours of Italy were already admired in the eighteenth century. Michele Marieschi's painting of the Doge's Palace in Venice (right) found its way into Frederick the Great's collection. Further south, the bay of Naples was not much frequented by tourists: southern Italy was poor, unhealthy and infested with bandits. Painting by Antonio Poli. (Charlottenburg Schloss, West Berlin.)*

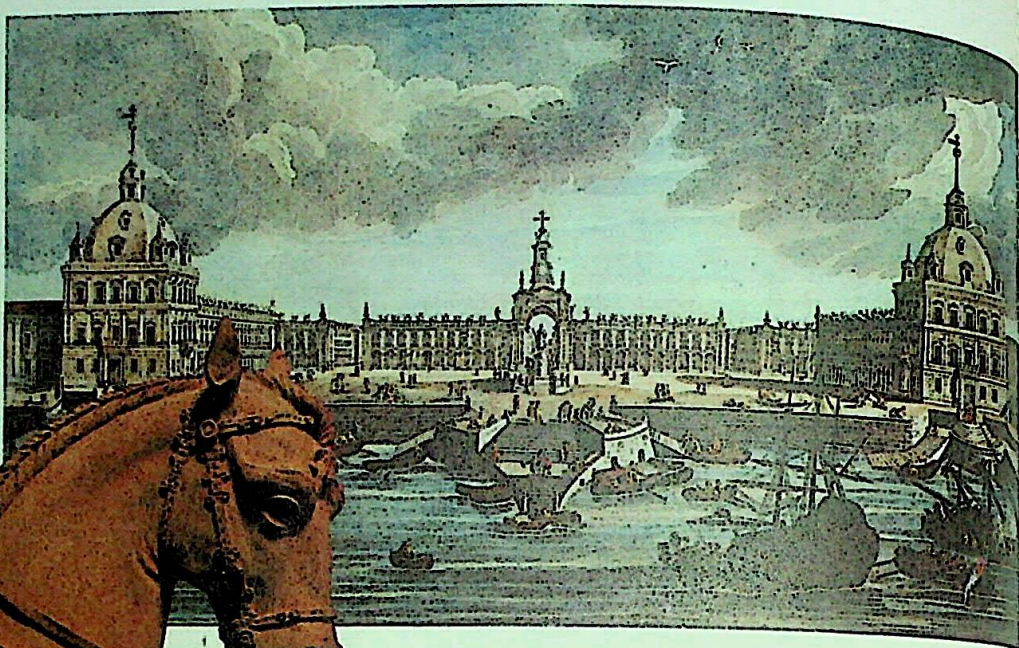
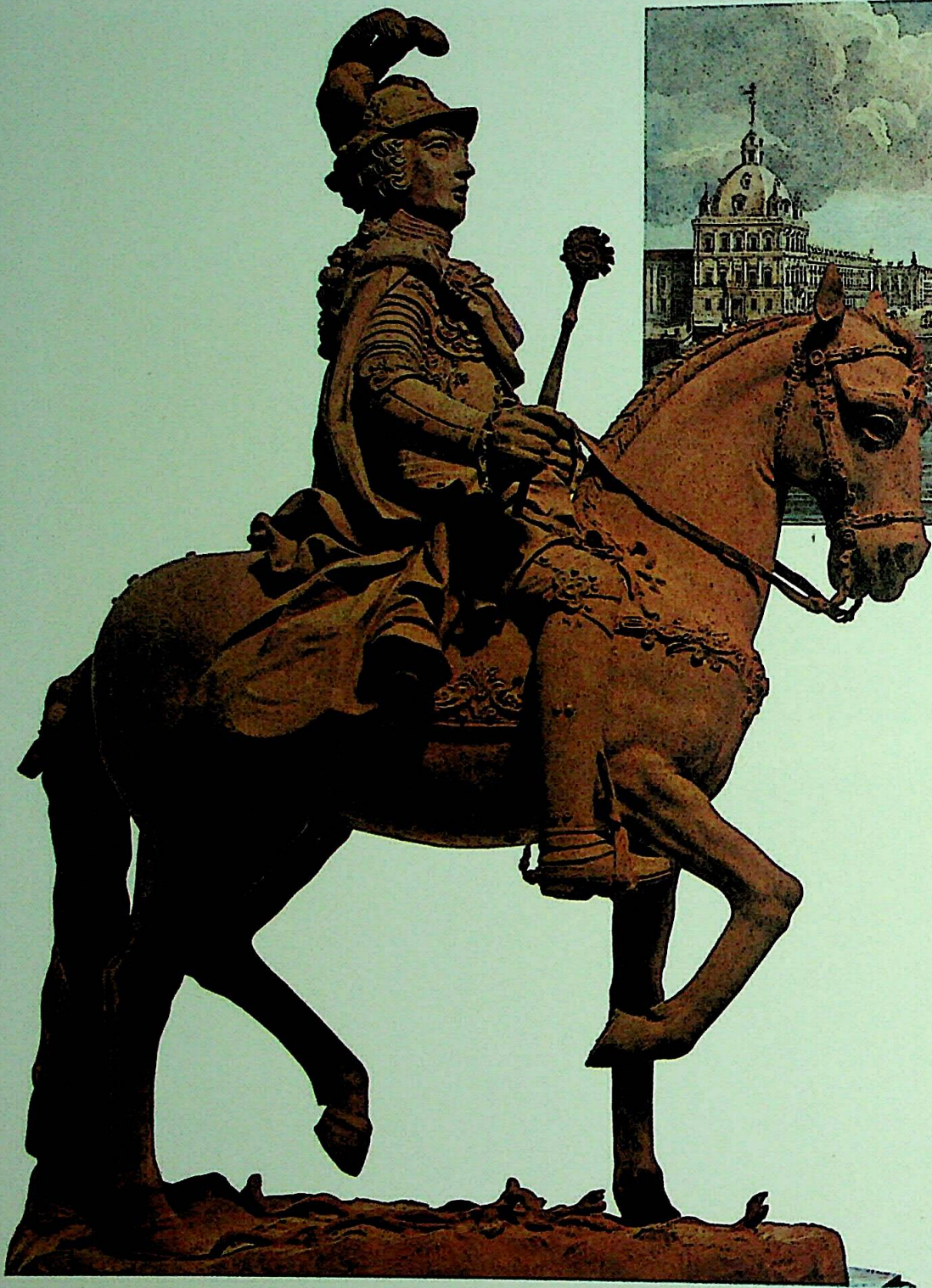
## Tourist paradise

Italy was already a tourist's paradise, and the high point of the English aristocrat's 'grand tour'. The pleasures of Venice and the splendours of Rome could be enjoyed in a warm climate, and the more discriminating tourist relished the art treasures in which Italy abounded. Remains of Roman antiquity were still to be seen, and the hardy and serious-minded might risk being attacked by southern brigands to visit newly excavated Pompeii and Herculaneum.

What the tourist found picturesque was merely squalid in the eyes of intelligent Italians. The gap between rich and poor was







*Above: The indolent Joseph I, during whose reign Pombal exercised dictatorial powers. Terracotta statuette by Machado de Castro. (Museu da Cidade, Lisbon.)*

*Background: engraving of the projected commercial centre of Lisbon after the earthquake of 1755. (Museu da Cidade, Lisbon.)*

*Far right: Goya's portrait of Charles IV's queen, Maria Luisa (Museo del Prado, Madrid.)*

*Right: Pombal, ruler of Portugal for twenty-seven years. (Museu da Cidade, Lisbon.)*

even greater than elsewhere in Europe. Crime and violence were endemic, and law-enforcement corrupt and arbitrary. Economic fragmentation, clerical privileges, the dominance of the feudal nobility in the south, all aggravated the pressure of a growing population on the resources provided by a backward agriculture.

The states ruled by Italians failed to meet the challenge. Venice lived on her great commercial past and her tourist present; her trade declined, her fleet decayed, and the fabled stability of her constitution became *rigor mortis*. Genoa, like Venice, practised

neutrality as the only means of survival: her forces proved inadequate to control rebellion in wild and primitive Corsica, which was sold to the French (1768). The kingdom of Sardinia-Savoy, no longer able to profit by the quarrels of France, Spain and Austria, ceased to expand, remaining in the grip of a feudal nobility governed by an intermittently despotic king. The Papal States were worse governed still; a few reforms were introduced in the eighteenth century, but popes were hardly in a position to attack clerical privilege. Only in states attached to foreign powers—the villains of the nine-



teenth-century drama of Italian unification  
—was a serious effort made to cure Italy's ills.

## Habsburg and Bourbon in Italy

The Habsburgs in the north were the most successful. Under Maria Theresa and Joseph, Lombardy (as the duchy of Milan began to be called) became the most prosperous area in Italy, largely thanks to financial reforms culminating in a fixed tax on land (1757). Many of the Austro-Bohemian reforms were introduced in Lombardy, including the reduction and regulation of feudal obligations, the suppression of monasteries and the partial abrogation of clerical tax exemption.

In Grand Duke Leopold (later Leopold II of Austria), Tuscany had perhaps the most enlightened ruler of the age. During his twenty-five year reign (1765–90), Leopold reformed the prison system, abolished torture and the death penalty, introduced tax equality, suppressed the guilds and (without complete success) struggled to diminish clerical privileges. The army was disbanded and the entire Tuscan navy (two ships) sold to Russia. But Leopold's most important achievement was to abolish all restrictions on trade, internal and external, including the internal tolls and customs barriers that survived from the age of Italian city-states.

Naples and Sicily provided more intractable problems. The Italian south was impoverished, infertile and malarial. Vast areas had not been brought under cultivation; almost all land was owned by the nobility, the Church and the king. The nobility, backed by armed retainers, existed in a state of feudal semi-independence, wielding powers of life and death over the peasantry. The Church was enormously wealthy and, like the nobles, exempt from most taxes.

The enlightened despot was not equipped to solve a problem of this magnitude: it is by no means solved today. Under Elizabeth Farnese's son Charles and (after 1759) his minister Tanucci, some clerical abuses were remedied, feudal obligations were reduced, the number of noble retainers was limited, and an attempt was made to civilise and tame the nobility. The struggle to control the Church assumed an anti-papal aspect with the expulsion of the Jesuits (1767) and Tanucci's refusal to acknowledge the vague papal overlordship of Naples. Such measures made an admirable beginning, but only a beginning; and Naples was to be denied the generations of firm and enlightened rule that alone could have given her order and prosperity.

### The papacy

Even in the seventeenth century, the papacy retained a not inconsiderable influence in international affairs, and, but for Innocent



XI. Austria might not have chased the Turks from Vienna. In the eighteenth century this influence disappeared, along with the intense politico-religious quarrels that had sustained it. For diplomatic purposes, the pope was an insignificant Italian prince, with no army to speak of, whose territory could be violated with impunity.

The Church—and papal power over the Church—was regarded with increasing hostility by Catholic rulers. The papacy was

constantly on the defensive. New concordats with Catholic powers increased the state's rights of appointment and taxation; monarchs dissolved monasteries and forbade the unlicensed publication of papal edicts. Habsburgs and Bourbons carried the war on the Church into Italy itself.

Catholic anti-clericalism was not new; nor was the struggle between Church and state. But it had entered a new phase of intensity with the development of bureau-



*Below: Spain's 'enlightened despot', Charles III, in hunting dress. From the portrait by Goya, who himself had a passion for the chase.*

*Below right: hunting scene at Aranjuez. Painting by J. B. del Mazo.*

cratic state power and the state's growing need of revenue. And it was strongly coloured by the anti-clericalism of the Enlightenment, which tended to see the Church, and above all the Jesuits, as a sort of international conspiracy. For the Jesuits this meant temporary extinction. They were expelled from Portugal (1759), France (1764), Spain, Naples and Parma (1767). Finally, when the Bourbon powers united to coerce the pope, the order was dissolved (1773). This conflict, like so many others,

was curtailed by the French Revolution, which united Church and king against the common enemy.

## The revival of Spain

In the sixteenth century, Spain drew recklessly on the resources of her mighty empire in an attempt to dominate Europe and extirpate Protestantism. The legacy of that effort was a countryside drained of its manpower; an economy disrupted by the expulsion of heretical Jews and Moors, and by the quantities of bullion that had poured in from the American colonies: a backward-looking, pious society, with a vast number of gentlemen (*hidalgos*) who considered most forms of work beneath them; and a mass of malpractices, useless honorary offices and antiquated institutions and regulations. The decline of Spanish power and prestige, visible throughout the seventeenth century, reached its nadir in the reign of the last Spanish Habsburg, the degenerate Charles II (1665–1700), and the subsequent War of





Spanish Succession. At the end of the war the Bourbon dynasty (in the person of Philip V, grandson of Louis XIV of France) occupied another throne; but Spain had lost all her European possessions.

The disaster was less complete than it seemed. Spain was no longer obliged to overtax her resources by trying to defend the Netherlands, Milan and Naples; and the Bourbon administration displayed a reforming spirit that was, by Spanish standards, remarkable. Most of the credit belonged not to Philip V, but to his wife, Elizabeth Farnese, who controlled Spanish policy down to Philip's death in 1746.

Elizabeth was Philip's second wife, and her sons were unlikely to succeed to the throne; so she determined to carve out an inheritance for them in Italy. Over a period of years, she succeeded in making Charles king of Naples and Philip duke of Parma. The triumph was dynastic rather than national, since these acquisitions were not under Spanish sovereignty; and Elizabeth's initial successes were gained through mak-

ing Spain a nuisance rather than a terror to the great powers. All the same, Spanish prestige was undoubtedly increased.

When Philip arrived to fight for his Spanish crown (1701), he brought with him French experts who remedied some of the more obvious abuses. Their reforms played an important part in winning the war in Spain. Reform continued under Elizabeth, and for the same reason: an ambitious foreign policy necessitated an improvement in revenue and the creation of an efficient army and navy. Economic and fiscal reform did not go deep: energy and efficiency in exploiting resources, not structural change, was the rule; but the result was not unimpressive.

## Spain's enlightened despot

The death of Ferdinand VI (1746–59) brought one of Elizabeth Farnese's sons to the throne after all. Charles III (1759–88) was a competent and serious ruler, and at his accession he had already had twenty-five years' experience of governing Naples. Under Charles, as under so many supposedly enlightened despots, the needs of the state were paramount; but in attempting to satisfy those needs he was led to institute more fundamental changes than his predecessors.

Many of the reforms followed the familiar pattern of strengthening ministerial and bureaucratic control and ensuring efficient collection of revenue; but there was also a sustained attempt to revitalise the economy. The Spanish empire in America was reorganised, and its commerce stimulated through reforms which are outlined in the chapter on Latin America. As regards Spain, colonial trade ceased to be the monopoly of Cadiz and Seville and was opened to most Spanish ports and all Spanish nationals. The heavy sales tax that crippled commerce was drastically cut. Industry was encouraged by the abolition of guild restrictions and protected by tariffs, with the result that Spanish production of cotton cloths was surpassed only by that of Britain, and the silk and iron industries made considerable progress. There was no question of Spain becoming a great industrial nation, but Spanish manufactures at least took a respectable share of the internal and colonial markets.

The reform of agriculture, still the occupation of the overwhelming majority of the population, entailed a social revolution that few rulers were prepared or able to face. Charles attracted some foreign Catholic immigrants to work on uncultivated royal lands, distributed waste and other unused lands, and introduced free trade in grain—a creditable record. But the deep-seated problems—farmers' lack of capital, unequal distribution of land, infertility, wasteful use of land for pasture instead of arable, ignorance and conservatism—remained unsolved.

The most dramatic event of the reign was the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767. Charles and his ministers had no intention of introducing religious toleration, but they wished to complete royal control of the Church, which had been attained in most respects by the Concordat of 1753. Jesuits had been prominent in the riots of 1766, and Charles took the opportunity to subject the whole order to a biased enquiry whose findings gave him an excuse for expulsion. A reduction in the powers of the Inquisition completed the subjugation of Church to state.

Reform released energies which had been accumulating under the earlier Bourbons. With official approval, societies for economic improvement were formed in many Spanish towns. Despite colonial wars with Britain which disrupted trade and brought the government to the verge of bankruptcy, the fruits of Charles's policies became apparent in the rapid industrial and commercial growth of the seventeen-eighties. An age of prosperity and expansion seemed to have begun.

Instead, the accession of a feeble king, ruled by his wife and her favourite, restored the rule of incompetence; and the French Revolution and Napoleon inspired crown and people alike with a reinforced attachment to the values of the past. Despite the achievements of Spain's enlightened despot, Charles III, the next century was to be one of internal paralysis and external impotence.

## Brief awakening in Portugal

Portugal lay in an even deeper slumber, despite the national upsurge that terminated the brief period of Spanish rule (1580–1640). Like Spain, Portugal looked back on a glorious epic of exploration, colonial empire and commercial expansion. In the eighteenth century their only relics were the gold and diamond mines of Brazil and the complementary Angolese slave trade. Brazilian gold bore up a state in which a small population (only about three million by 1800) supported droves of idle gentlemen and a priesthood whose wealth, privileges and numbers were probably in relative terms the greatest in Europe. Gold was also used to make up Portugal's balance of payments deficit; for whereas manufactured goods poured into Portugal from Britain in particular, the sole Portuguese product for which there was any demand was port, one of the vices of the English gentry.

The only man who tried to change this state of affairs was the marquis of Pombal, who dominated Portugal throughout the reign of Joseph I (1750–77). Pombal was consistently brutal in suppressing actual, potential or imagined opposition; he was a dictator first and a reformer second. An attempt on the king's life (1758) provided him with an opportunity to break the great noble families and move against the Jesuits. Jesuit property was sequestered and the







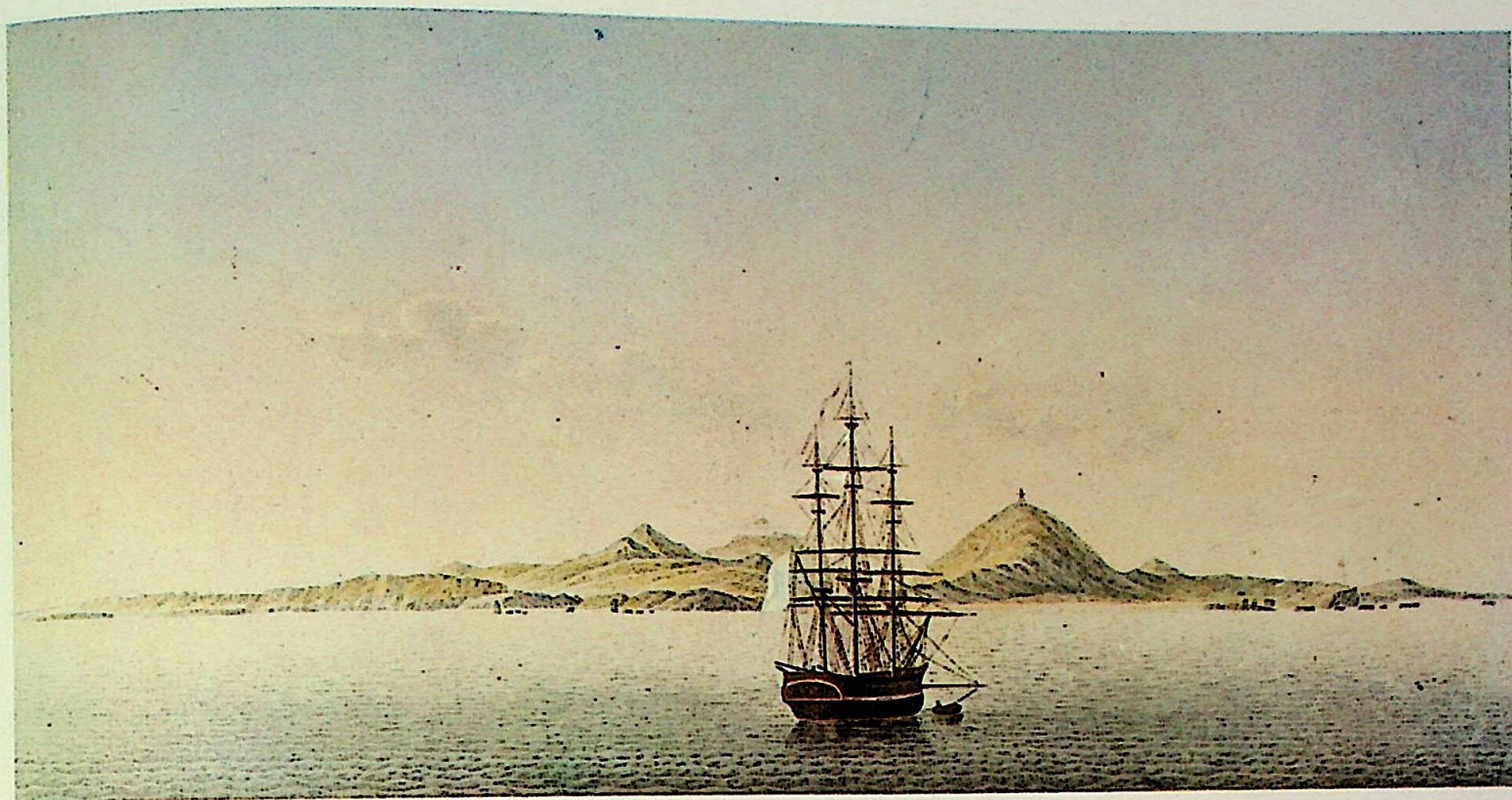
order expelled (1759), an action that was to be imitated by the Bourbon courts. Portuguese obedience to Rome was withdrawn until the final suppression of the order.

These actions were performed in the interests of the state and Pombal's own power: neither noble privileges nor the religious monopoly of the Church was ended, and the works of the philosophes continued to be banned. Apart from his Brazilian policy (for which see p. 122), Pombal's reforms were mainly designed to secure administrative and judicial efficiency, which had social implications only in so far as it entailed the abolition of sinecures. Much of his energy was employed in attempting to combat British domination of the Portuguese market—with inevitably limited success, since Portugal had not even the beginnings of a manufacturing economy able to supply her needs. In the last analysis, Pombal's revolution was largely political; and as such it was quickly reversed when the pious Maria I (1777-1816) succeeded Joseph.

With or without Pombal, Portugal remained a backwater of Europe. The great conflicts of the period concerned her directly only once, when Spain invaded in an unsuccessful attempt to close Portuguese harbours to the British (1762). One event made a European sensation: the terrible earthquake which destroyed Lisbon (1755). Lisbon, thanks to Pombal, was built again (and built better), but the shock—actual and psychic—was felt throughout Europe.

*With the end of the Seven Years War Europe began its decisive exploration of the Pacific. The Englishmen Wallis and Carteret rediscovered Tahiti and Pitcairn Island, but it was Captain James Cook's three great voyages that literally put the Pacific islands on the map. Oceania was inhabited by three distinct races—Melanesians, Micronesians and Polynesians, who were the latest arrivals in the Pacific.*





# The Far East, the Pacific and Latin America

*Chinese influence on the west; the insularity of China; the rise of the merchant class in Japan; the Europeanisation of Japan begins; exploration in the Pacific; Cook's voyages; European impact on the south seas; the Enlightenment in Latin America; growth of colonial self-confidence.*

## The Celestial Empire

Down to the nineteenth century, Europeans admired China. They saw that it was governed by well-educated civil servants who had been appointed as a result of open examinations; that sects and religions co-existed within an all-pervasive Confucian outlook that emphasised right behaviour rather than metaphysical dogma; and that the Chinese valued reason, civility and the arts. Not surprisingly, Voltaire held up China as a model for Europe.

This was not so much an inaccurate picture as a partial one. Among other things, it ignored the shortcomings of the civil

service, the stereotyped literary-magical nature of the Confucian learning required to pass examinations, and the conservatism and pliability bred by worship of the emperor ('the son of heaven'). But it did comprise many of the elements of Chinese life at its best: and that best seemed to have been achieved again in the eighteenth century.

The Manchu dynasty, barbarian conquerors from Manchuria who adopted Chinese speech and customs, gave China good government, internal peace and increase of empire. Under the dynamic Kang Hsi (1662-1722) and his successors, Yung Chang (1723-35) and the extremely able

Chien Lung (1736-96), the Chinese Empire reached the greatest extent in its long history. The lands adjoining China proper were brought firmly under control: the Mongols were crushed: the area north-west of China was organised as Sinkiang ('the new dominion'); the Tibetan Dalai Lama became a Chinese nominee; and the borders

*Eager Merchants and adventurers were among the first westerners to venture into the Pacific and eastern Asia. The merchant schooner shown above is anchored off Easter Island. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)*

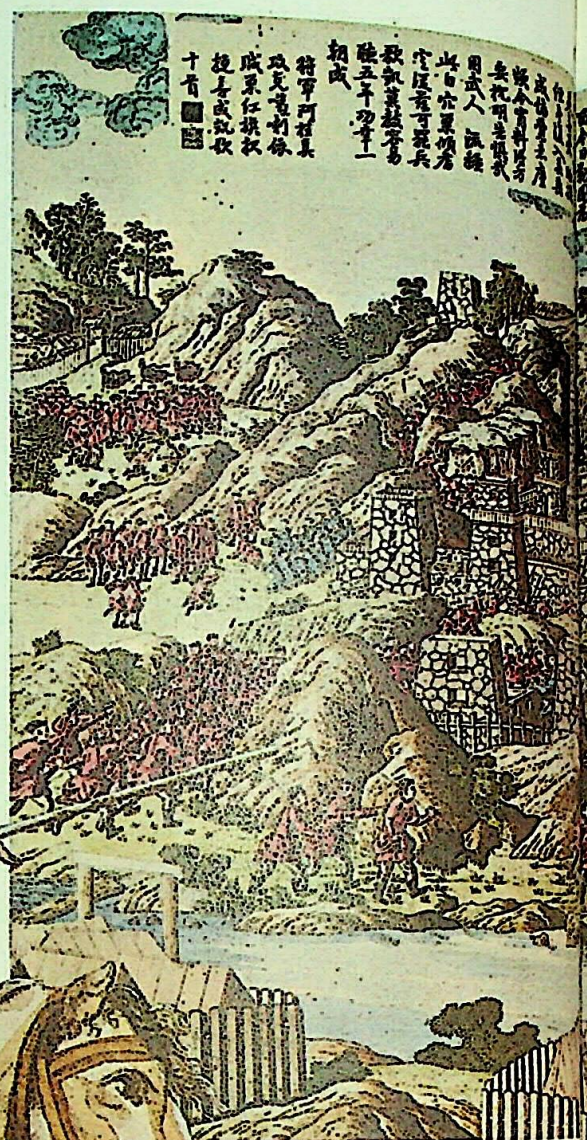


*In the eighteenth century the Chinese Empire reached its greatest extent.*

*Below: Chinese horseman.*

*Right: an attack on a port by Chieng Lung's troops. From The Conquests of Chien Lung.*

*Far right: Chinese musician. Société de Géographie. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)*







of Manchuria were stabilised by treaty with the Russians at the northernmost reaches of the Amur River. Formosa was conquered and integrated into the empire: Korea, Annam, Burma and Nepal acknowledged the suzerainty of the Celestial Emperor.

Internal peace ensured prosperity, for China was a rich, self-sufficient land. The area under cultivation was notably increased, and population rose steeply, reaching some 300 million by 1800. No significant changes were introduced—which was, to the Chinese, entirely proper. Reverence for ancestors, for the past, for long-established practices, was a prime feature of the Confucian ethic, reinforced by the remarkable continuity of Chinese history.

Chinese conservatism was in fact becoming still more deeply ingrained. One of many fields in which this became apparent was literary activity, a great deal of which consisted in encyclopaedic compilations of literary classics and an increasingly sophisticated apparatus of critical scholarship. The same tendency, already perceptible under the previous Ming dynasty, appeared in all the arts, with the partial exception of porcelain. (Though, significantly, the new decorations the Chinese discovered were mainly applied on export ware.) The skills

of the past were employed to produce fine works of craftsmanship, often superbly executed in the great styles of the past: but creativity was absent.

Change is not, so to speak, compulsory: and attachment to the past has been the rule rather than the exception in history. Chinese indifference to new ideas was to prove disastrous in the nineteenth century, not because China was in some absolute sense 'in decline', but because her society was forced open by the aggressive, technologically advanced culture of Europe.

Much the same can be said of nineteenth-century Chinese political history. In his later years Chien Lung leaned upon a favourite minister, Ho Shen, who seems to have carried financial corruption to the most extravagant lengths. The tangle of injustice and extortion produced by a corrupt civil service provoked the first revolts for almost a hundred years. Henceforward they were to be frequent until the end of the dynasty—and the empire—in 1912. The incapacity of Chien Lung's successors indicates that the Manchus were following the pattern of previous dynasties: vigorous early emperors were succeeded by increasingly effete sovereigns, until an energetic usurper created a new dynasty—which

followed the same pattern. Again, it was not so much a question of Chinese decline as of a period of weakness coinciding with the irruption of a dynamic society—the West—into the closed world of China.

## The Jesuits in China

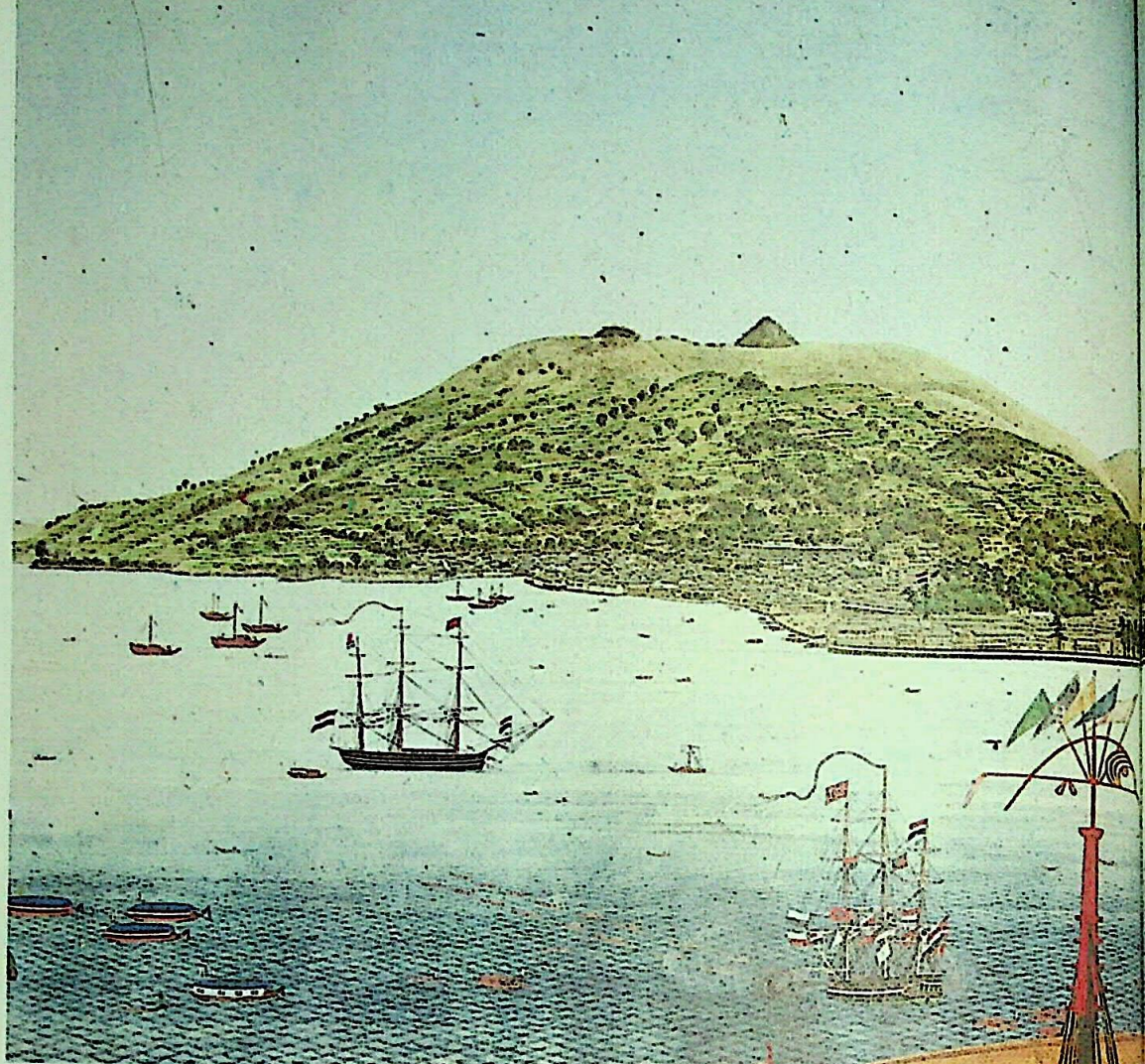
The one source from which the Chinese might have acquired new knowledge without loss of face was the Christian missionary. The overwhelming majority of missionaries were Catholics, of whom the most distinguished were the Jesuits. A Jesuit, Matteo Ricci, had been the first European Christian missionary in China since the Tang period (A.D. 618–907), and had commended himself to the Ming emperors as an astronomer and mathematician. Jesuits continued to act as scientific advisers under Kang Hsi, who appreciated their reform of the Chinese calendar (a most important feature of Chinese religious life) and in 1692 issued what was in effect an edict of toleration.

The Jesuits proved equally adaptable in their attempts to convert the Chinese, whose eclectic approach to religion made them impatient of claims to their exclusive devotion, and who were besides deeply attached to the rites honouring ancestors. To attack



In Japan, European trade was at first welcomed with enthusiasm, and under its stimulus Nagasaki (right) developed from a small village to a great mercantile centre. (Musée de la Marine, Paris.) By contrast, the Chinese emperors restricted European trade to Mucuo and (far right) a row of warehouses on the Canton waterfront. Engraving from *Voyage to the East Indies and China* made by M. Sonnerat.

(Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.) Below: a Cantonese junk, an attractive vessel, but one hardly suitable for long ocean voyages; the self-sufficiency of China inhibited its people from becoming sea-farers. (Musée de la Marine, Paris.)



these was to attack the fundament of Chinese civilisation, and Ricci and other Jesuits achieved some success by desisting, arguing that the Confucian ethic and filial piety were not incompatible with Christianity.

The question of 'the rites' was hotly debated within the Church, at least some of the opposition to Jesuit practice deriving from jealousy of the order within the Church. In 1715 the pope condemned the rites, later reinforcing his condemnation with the bull *Ex Illa Die* (1742). The hitherto benevolent Kang Hsi, who had backed the Jesuits, was deeply offended by this insult to Chinese culture. New Chinese decrees effectively prevented the spread of Christianity (1717), and Chinese Christianity went into a decline that was hastened by the papal dissolution of the Jesuit order (1773).

All questions of religion aside, it was a misfortune for the Chinese too. Contact with the Jesuits enabled the Chinese court to become familiar with the inventions of the western barbarians, without publicity and therefore without loss of face. Not that the conditions existed in China for an industrial revolution of the sort about to begin in the West; but the Chinese might at least have come to understand the extent of Western power and the workings of the Western mind. Since Europeans were no better informed, mutual incomprehension was responsible for much of the violence with which East and West met in the nineteenth century.

## Europe and the Chinese world-state

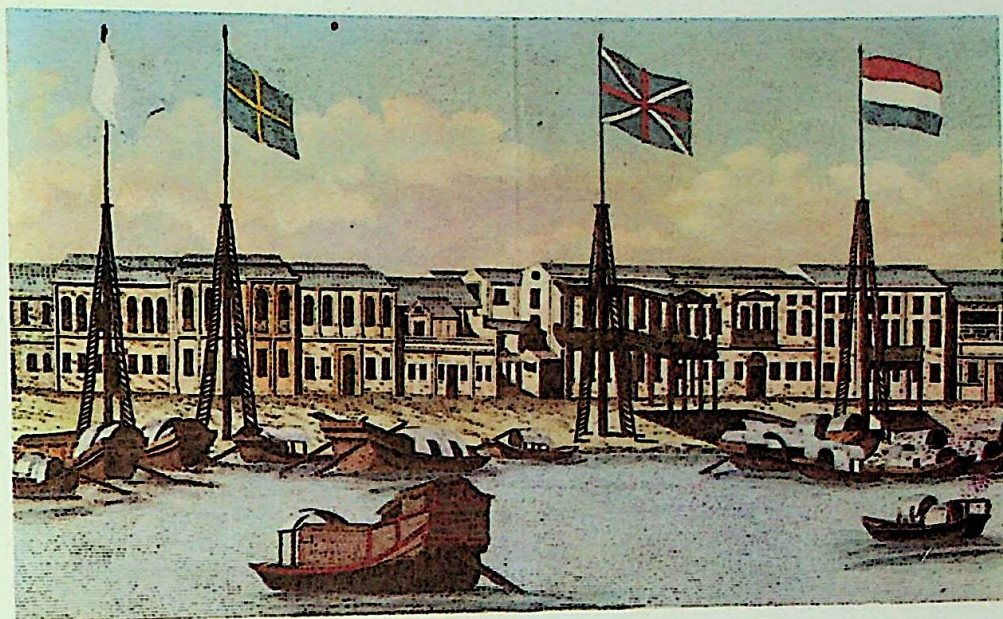
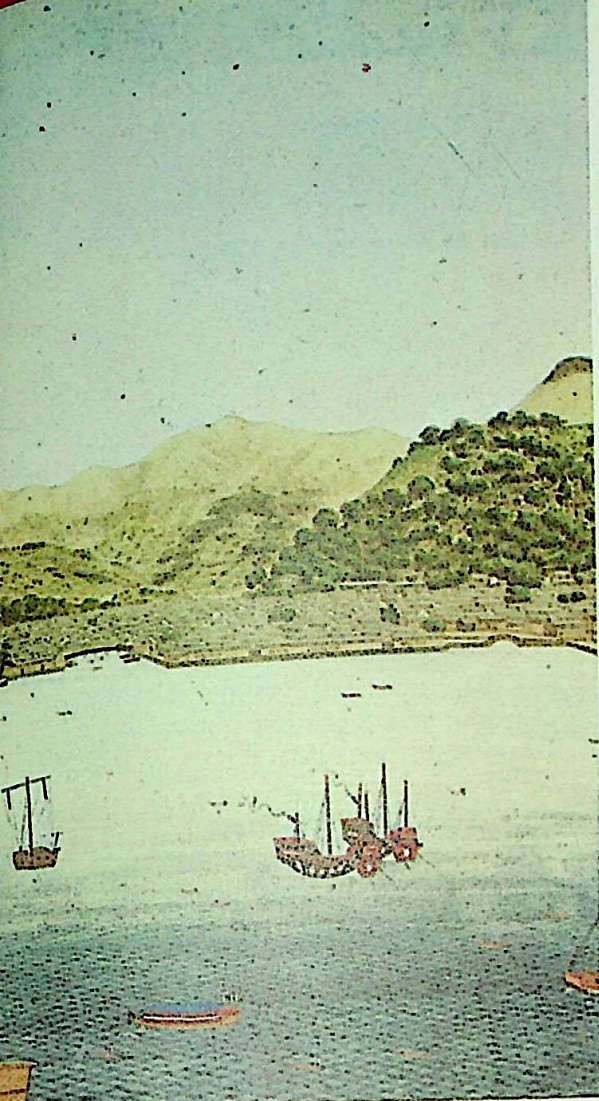
The Chinese conception of the world made other forms of contact impossible. Insulated for millennia by seas, deserts and mountains from states of comparable power and civilisation, the Chinese had known only cultural inferiors—like the steppe nomads, who had sometimes overrun China, only to adopt Chinese speech and customs and imitators like the Japanese.

Understandably, therefore, they had come to believe that their state was 'the state' and that Chinese culture was 'culture'. The emperor was the only ruler below heaven, though not all barbarians had yet submitted to him or mastered the ways of civilisation. Of diplomacy, which presupposes the existence of more than one state, the Chinese had no conception.

When Britain sent embassies, they were greeted as tribute-bearing missions. The arrival of Lord Macartney (1793) and Lord Amherst (1816) was met with impressive ceremony and great politeness, though the question of whether the ambassadors would kowtow to the emperor (thus acknowledging Britain's tributary status) caused dignified wrangles. But there was no question of a permanent embassy: tributaries delivered gifts, heard the emperor's commands, and took themselves off.







## The China trade

Inability to establish diplomatic relations became increasingly irritating with the growth of trade with China, particularly to the British, who outstripped their commercial rivals in the eighteenth century. The China trade was extremely profitable but subject to strict limitations. The Portuguese in Macao, the British and other Europeans in Canton, existed in waterfront 'factories' sealed off from China. They dealt solely with a guild of Chinese merchants, the Hong, who were able to fix prices arbitrarily; official China ignored their existence. European representations failed to make any impression on the Chinese.

From their own point of view, the Chinese had good reasons. If diplomatic agreements were unthinkable, diplomatic regulation of trade was a still more absurd notion: merchants (even Chinese merchants) were a despised class, and the emperor could not participate in their activities. Furthermore, there was no place for foreign merchants within the structure of Chinese society: their presence on the waterfront was 'overlooked', and if they misbehaved the Hong merchants were punished. An imperial officer taxed the Hong, of course, so that the emperor was able to profit by the arrangement without being contaminated.

This attitude was reinforced by China's self-sufficiency. Europeans wanted Chinese

silks, porcelain, tea; China wanted nothing from Europe. There was an important economic aspect to this situation: China had to be paid in bullion, which had been intermittently drained from the West since Roman times. The imbalance of trade between East and West led Europeans to wink at illegal traffic in the one commodity Chinese wanted: opium. From 1773 the East India Company had a monopoly of its manufacture and sold it to all comers: what they did with it was their business. By 1800 large quantities of the drug were being sold over the sides of ships in the Canton River.

The nineteenth century witnessed a tremendous development in the opium trade, and increasingly direct participation in it by Europeans. Diplomatic redress was impossible without diplomatic relations; mutual incomprehension excluded moderation. Chinese notions of collective responsibility made it natural for them to blame all Europeans for the behaviour of a few; and an unfortified coast and a non-existent navy made threats or reprisals directed against the European merchant community the natural response to European self-assertion. The pattern of nineteenth-century conflict was already predictable.

## Japan in seclusion

Japan was closed to the West even more firmly than China. The Europeans who arrived from 1542-3 taught the Japanese to





use firearms and build fortifications on the European model. They also brought Christianity, which enjoyed considerable popularity in the sixteenth century but became increasingly identified with political subversion and external aggression. The Japanese reaction was ferocious and extreme: by 1638 Christianity had been uprooted by force and Japanese ports shut to Europeans: even Japanese abroad were forbidden to return. Previously a roving people with a reputation as fearless soldiers and pirates, the Japanese let a sizeable fleet and an expanding trade run down.

The only exceptions were trade with China and with the Dutch, who were allowed to operate from the islet of Deshima. They lived in cramped conditions and under close supervision of a sort that made the lot of Europeans in Canton enviable; and once a year they were brought to grovel at the imperial court. Through the Dutch, the Japanese acquired some knowledge of Western science, especially medicine, though by the early eighteenth century only two Dutch ships were arriving each year. Until the Industrial Revolution, Japan knew enough of the West to be certain that she remained secure against interference; and she wanted to know no more.

## The Tokugawa regime

Isolation was not unfamiliar to the Japanese. The mountainous archipelago of Japan was most densely populated on the east coast, away from the Asian continent; even China was far away. Once in every few centuries

the Japanese took some part in Asian wars, and their early history had been deeply influenced by the superior civilisation of China; but extended contact was impossible, and Japanese society absorbed Chinese influences without losing its distinctive character.

Isolation, an agrarian economy, and a regionalism created by the irregular topography of Japan, had led to the development of a military feudal society in which central authority was hard to maintain for any length of time. Since the twelfth century, the real head of the Japanese government had usually been a *shogun* ('generalissimo'). The emperor was a ceremonial figure, deeply revered but powerless. However, the shogun might in turn be the puppet of a powerful noble house with a 'clan' of relatives and military retainers (the famous *samurai*). Japan easily became the battlefield of rival clans, as was the case during most of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

From 1603 to 1867 the shogunate was in the hands of the Tokugawa family, who greatly strengthened it. But, although Japan enjoyed a long period of peace under the Tokugawas, the price was high. Unity and stability—and Tokugawa power—could be maintained only by ceaseless vigilance. Access to the imperial court at Kyoto was rigidly controlled by the shogun. The great nobles were compelled to build villas at the effective capital, Yedo (later Tokyo), where their families resided permanently, as permanent hostages; noble fiefs were changed so that suspects were always neighbours of

powerful loyal vassals; the nobility was coerced or encouraged to spend lavishly so that they should not become too powerful; travel was viewed with suspicion; and the country was filled with spies and spies on spies. The Tokugawa regime was as near a police state as pre-industrial technology allowed.

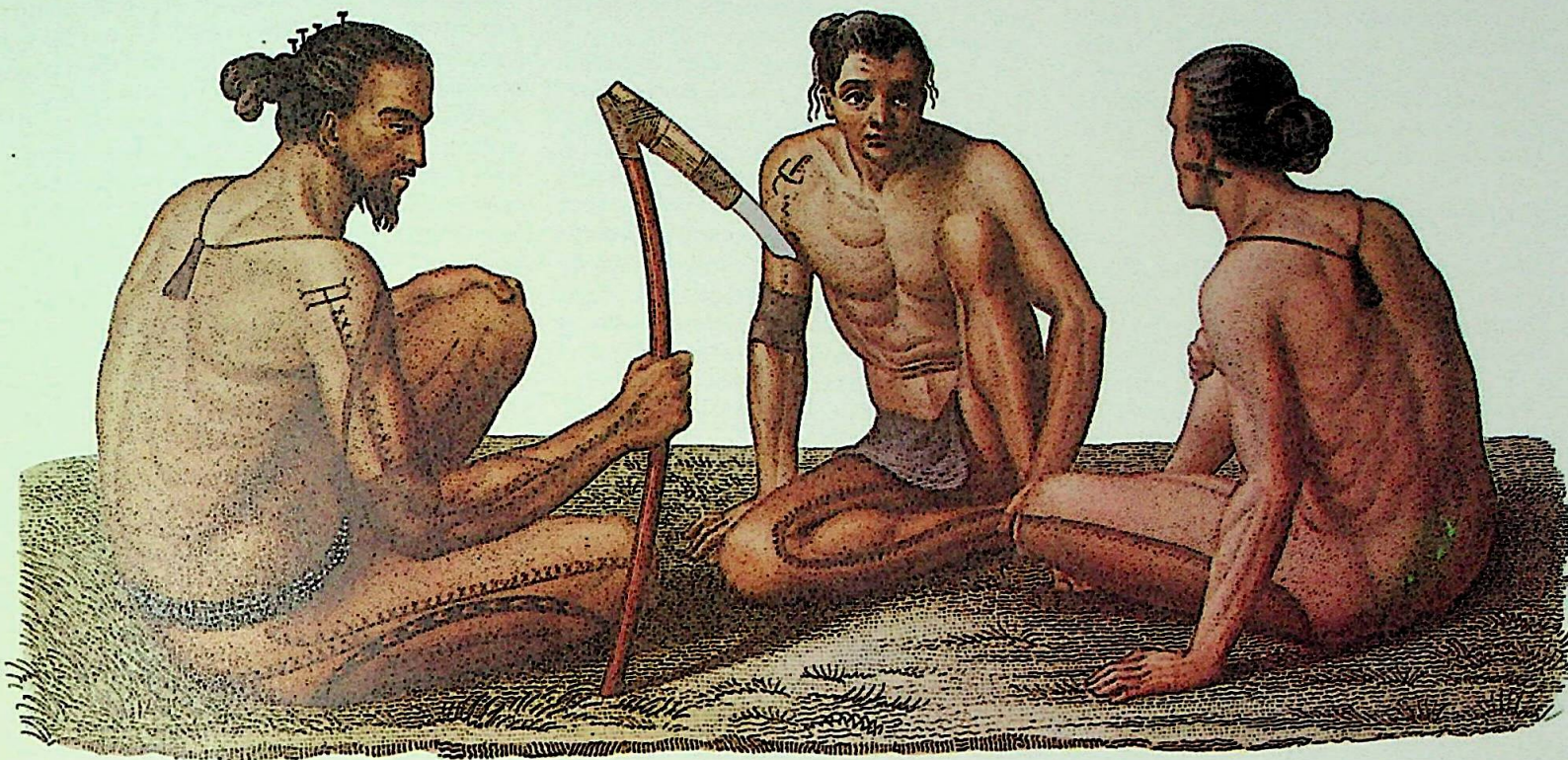
Extended peace aided the growth of a prosperous merchant class and a money economy, and these were accompanied, from the late seventeenth century, by the development of a sophisticated urban society. Yedo, with almost a million inhabitants, was in the forefront, swollen with officials, noble families and their servants, merchants looking for a good time, and an army of entertainers both reputable and disreputable, hawkers, beggars and

*When Japan was sealed off from the outside world, the only point of contact with Europeans was Deshima, an islet in the harbour of Nagasaki (above), through which the Dutch were allowed to trade. (Musée de la Marine, Paris.) On the other hand, the exploration of Oceania introduced Europeans to peoples with a wide variety of customs.*

*Above right: natives of Oualan, in the Carolines; from Duperrey's Voyage around the World. Société de Géographie. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)*

*Below right: canoe rowed by Hawaiian Islanders in masks. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)*







hangers-on. A new kind of audience stimulated the production of a vigorous and realistic popular art, including the puppet and Kabuki theatres for which Japan's greatest dramatist, Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653–1725), wrote his works, and the great woodblock artists, Hokusai (1760–1849) and Utamaro (1754–1806).

## Decay of the regime

The contradictions inherent in the Tokugawas' policies became apparent in the eighteenth century. Without external enemies (for the outside world had been abolished), a military aristocracy could not exist unchanged during a long period of peace. The shoguns, on whom the whole system rested, were not always fit for their post; and, lacking military occupation, many samurai and some of the great nobles fell into dissipation and debt. Masterless samurai became some-

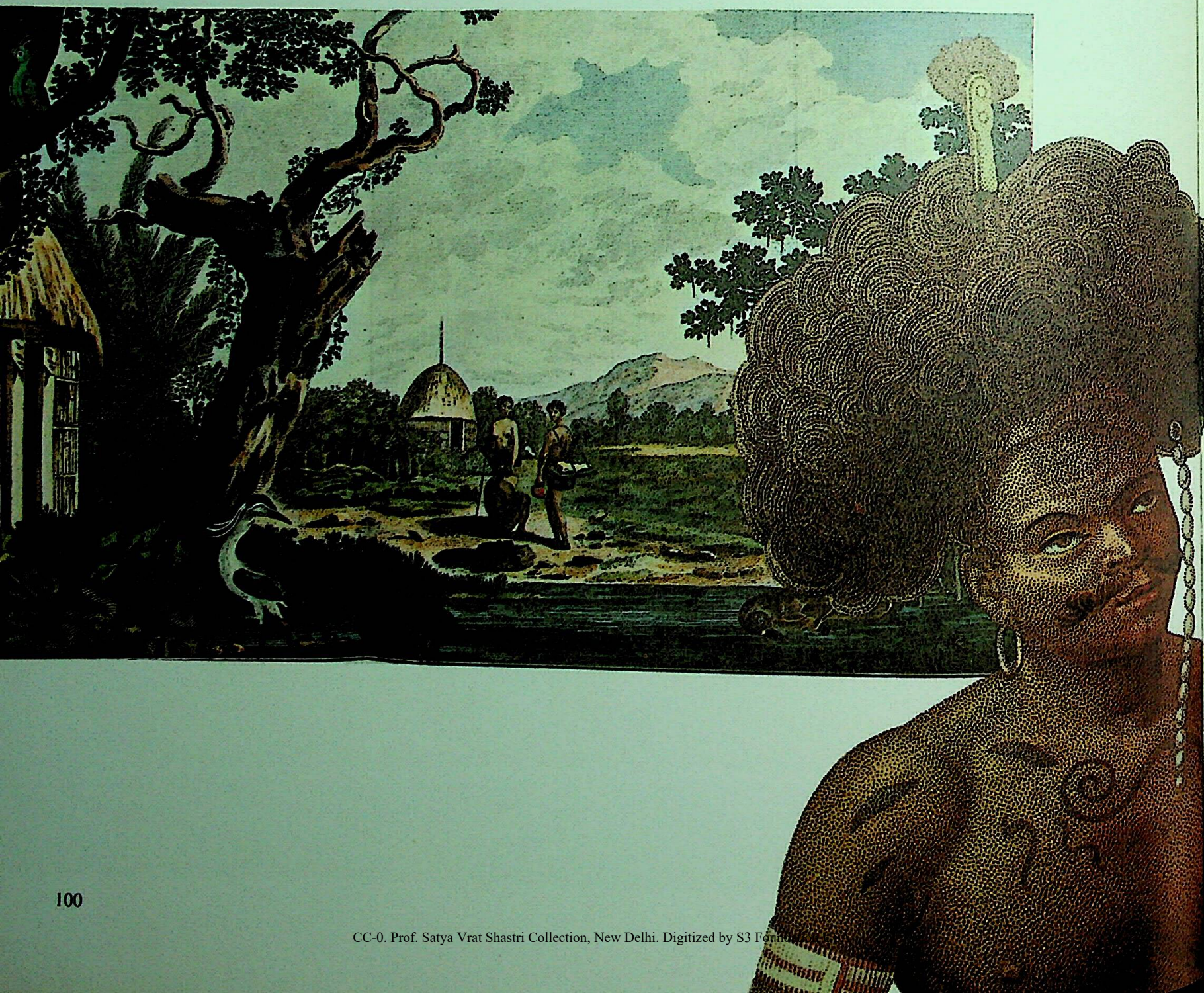
thing of a social menace, a privileged caste of unemployed who were disbarred from useful work and made quarrelsome by pride and poverty.

Though the population remained at about 30 million throughout the eighteenth and well into the nineteenth century, agrarian disorders became frequent from the seventeen-eighties. The peasant's lot was always difficult in mountainous Japan, where more than half the land was uncultivable and the work of years liable to destruction by earthquake, flood or typhoon, but things seem to have become appreciably worse in the eighteenth century, probably because landlords attempted to solve their own difficulties by evictions and increased demands on the peasantry.

The last shogun to make serious efforts to restore stability was Yoshimune (1717–44), and his programme amounted to little more than a revival of regimentation. He

also issued the first of many decrees favouring debtors—for it was no part of the Tokugawas' intentions that merchants should become more powerful than their social superiors. Indeed, rigid maintenance of social distinctions had been one of the formulas of Tokugawa stability.

Other developments threatened the position of the Tokugawas themselves. They had encouraged Confucianism because it inculcated reverence for law and civil authority; but the Confucian cult of the emperor was less welcome to a military dictatorship. Revival of interest in Shinto, the indigenous religion of Japan, also fostered imperial sentiment, since it proclaimed the emperor's descent from the sun-goddess. From about the mid-eighteenth century a spirit that was at once deeply nationalistic and hostile to the shogunate became manifest. Other disquieting events, including the restiveness of the great feudatories in outlying areas





(never effectively controlled by the Tokugawas), indicated that the 200-year-old police state could not endure much longer.

What would have replaced it remains a matter of speculation. The merchants—bankers and money-lenders rather than a mercantile or industrial middle class—would almost certainly not have done so. It is more likely that another cycle of feudal in-fighting would have commenced. In fact, Japan was to be wrenched out of her seclusion by the intrusion of Western ideas and technology, announced by the arrival of the American, Commodore Perry, in 1853. Unlike China, she proved capable of integrating them into her existing society, just as she had integrated Chinese culture a thousand years before. Post-Tokugawa Japan re-entered world history, but as a curious hybrid of old and new.

*The Melanesians were the most primitive of the Pacific races, living in small, isolated communities. The scene of New Caledonian life (left) is accurately rendered but infused with a European sensibility. From Cook's Voyage towards the South Pole and around the World, London, 1777. (British Museum.)*

*Below: natives of New Guinea. From Duperrey's Voyage around the World. Société de Géographie. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)*





## Europeans in the Pacific

At the beginning of the eighteenth century there were still vast areas of the globe of which Europeans knew nothing: the African interior, most of the Americas, the Pacific. The great exploratory achievement of the century was to chart the largest of these areas—the Pacific: an islanded expanse of water which covers about a third of the world's surface, framed by eastern Asia, the Americas and both polar regions, and comprising a great diversity of climatic conditions, flora and fauna which—before the European came—supported widely different societies.

In the sixteenth century, Europeans established themselves in the East Indies (modern Indonesia) and the Philippines. The first European crossing of the Pacific was made by three Spanish ships commanded by Magellan, which went on to complete the first circumnavigation of the earth (1519–22). After this, Spanish voyages in the Pacific became frequent, and a regular trade began between Manila and Spanish America; but, though the Pacific was used as a waterway, little progress was made in charting or exploring it.

There were several reasons for this—the frequency with which great naval powers became involved in European wars, the secrecy with which any seemingly lucrative discovery was guarded—but the fundamental reason was navigational. A less than perfect ability to determine longitude did not prevent a ship from locating a sizeable land-mass: but it made it impossible to chart and rediscover the position of a Pacific archipelago. Hence the early Spanish explorers kept discovering islands and losing them again, as Mendana discovered the Solomons on his first voyage (1567), only to miss them at a second try (1595) and end up in the Marquesas. The islands sighted by Quiros on his voyage in search of a southern continent (1606) were also 'lost'. And though Quiros's deputy, Torres, discovered a passage through the reefs and shoals separating Australia from New Guinea, the fact was not widely known for generations. It continued to be believed that Australia and New Guinea were part of the same land-mass, and even in 1768 Bougainville was not sufficiently convinced to attempt the passage.

## Terra Australis

Lack of progress in exploring the innumerable islands of Oceania is understandable: lack of interest in the island continent of Australia, close at hand, is at first sight inexplicable, and especially in view of the European obsession with 'Terra Australis', the great southern continent that was believed to exist somewhere between the Cape of Good Hope and Cape Horn. Marco Polo had described its enormous

wealth; Biblical interpretation supported Marco; and symmetry and sense required the existence of a land-mass to balance those of the northern hemisphere and stop the earth toppling over.

There were, however, practical difficulties in pursuing the quest for the southern continent. Spanish ships came from Peru, Mexico or round the Horn—when the south-east trade winds lifted them steadily towards the Equator, so that they missed most of the actual Polynesian islands as well as the mythical Terra Australis—or sailed north from the Philippines to catch the westerlies that took them to Spanish America.

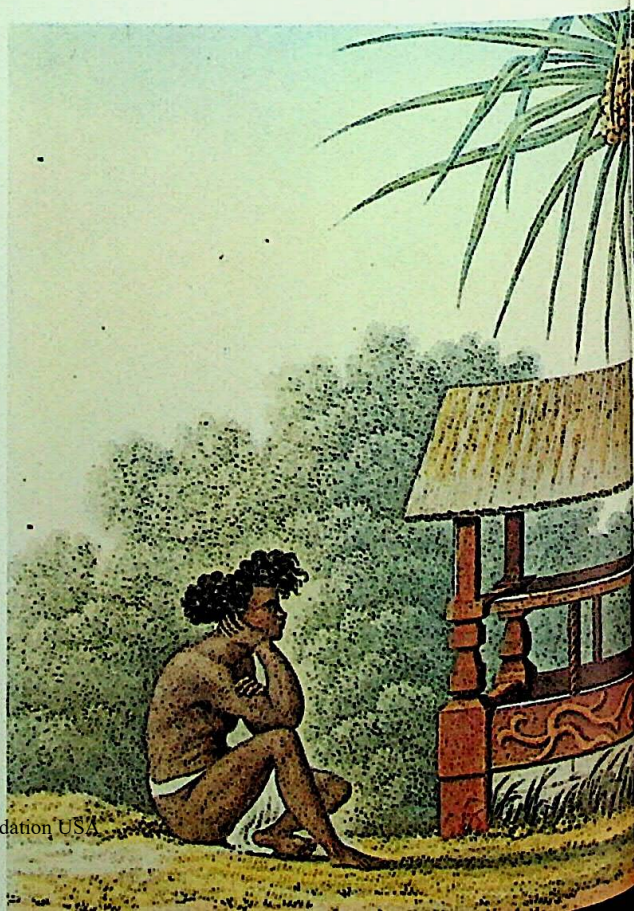
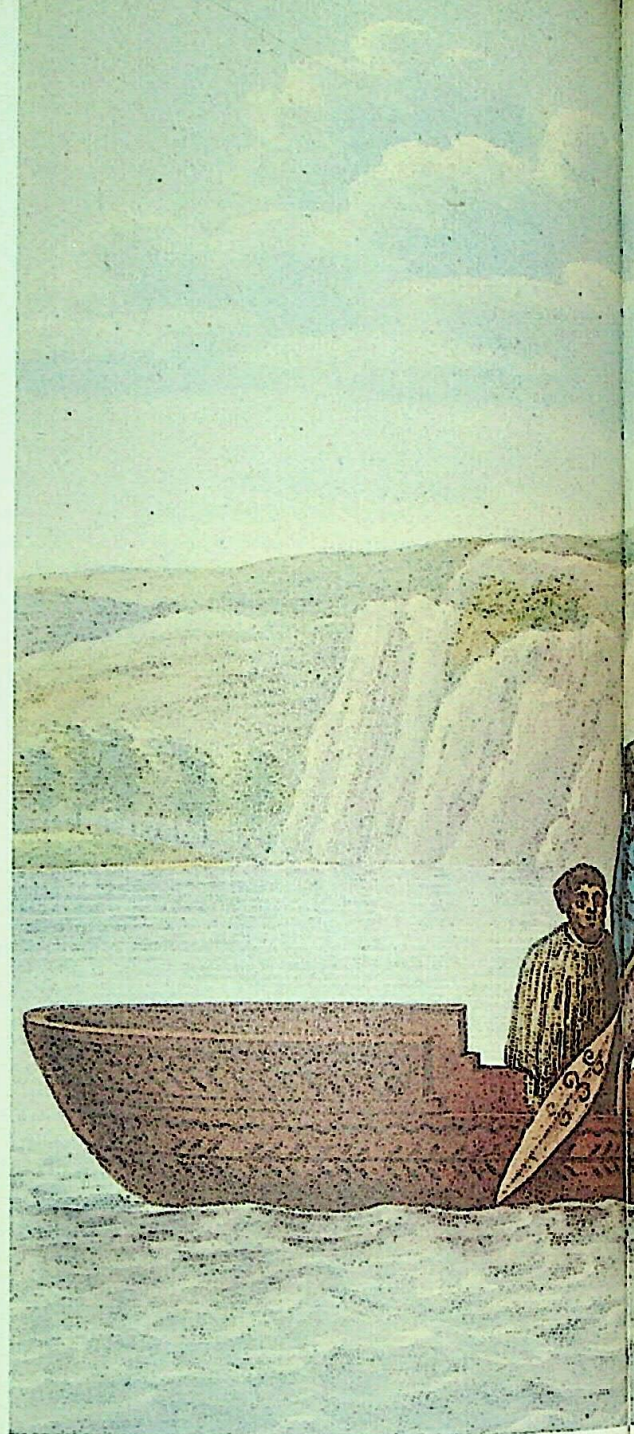
Nor were the Dutch better placed in New Guinea, though they were inhibited by more mercenary considerations. In 1605 William Janszoon discovered New Holland (Australia), and the north and west coasts were soon fairly well known; but as they happen to be the least attractive areas of Australia, and were inhabited by Aborigines who seemed dirty, utterly primitive and poverty-stricken, there was no great incentive to explore further. This could not be the fabled Terra Australis.

The Dutch were right in this respect, as they discovered when a serious voyage of exploration was at last undertaken. In 1642, by sailing eastward from Mauritius so that the winds enabled him to stay in a high latitude (i.e. far south), Tasman proved that there was no Terra Australis in the Indian Ocean. He reached what is now Tasmania, and went on to New Zealand, Tonga and the Fiji Islands. It thus became clear that Australia was an island (though New Guinea and Tasmania were still believed to be parts of it), and it was the *known* southern land (Terra Australis *Cognita*). Belief in the southern continent (Terra Australis *In-cognita*) remained unshaken, though its projected area was diminished; Tasman himself thought that New Zealand might be its northern promontory.

And there matters remained for more than a century. The Dutch East India Company, like the Spanish Council of State before it, decided that it had better things to do with men, ships and money than to search for the southern continent. Europeans became pre-occupied with their wars, and when the British, the sea-faring people *par excellence* in the eighteenth century, appeared in Pacific waters, it was as buccaneers (like Dampier) or predators on enemy shipping (like Anson). Only after the Seven Years War was Europe to begin its decisive irruption into the Pacific.

## Cook

Credit for this achievement is rightly given to Captain James Cook. The Englishmen Wallis and Carteret discovered—or rather rediscovered—Tahiti and Pitcairn Island in 1767; and in 1768 a French ship under the







*The Maoris of New Zealand held their own against the white man, though the presence of whalers and escaped convicts made the life of the islands notoriously vicious and violent.*

*Above: Maoris in a canoe, with a chief smoking a pipe and dressed in European clothes.*

*Left: Melanesian tomb. From Duperrey's Voyage around the World. Société de Géographie. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)*



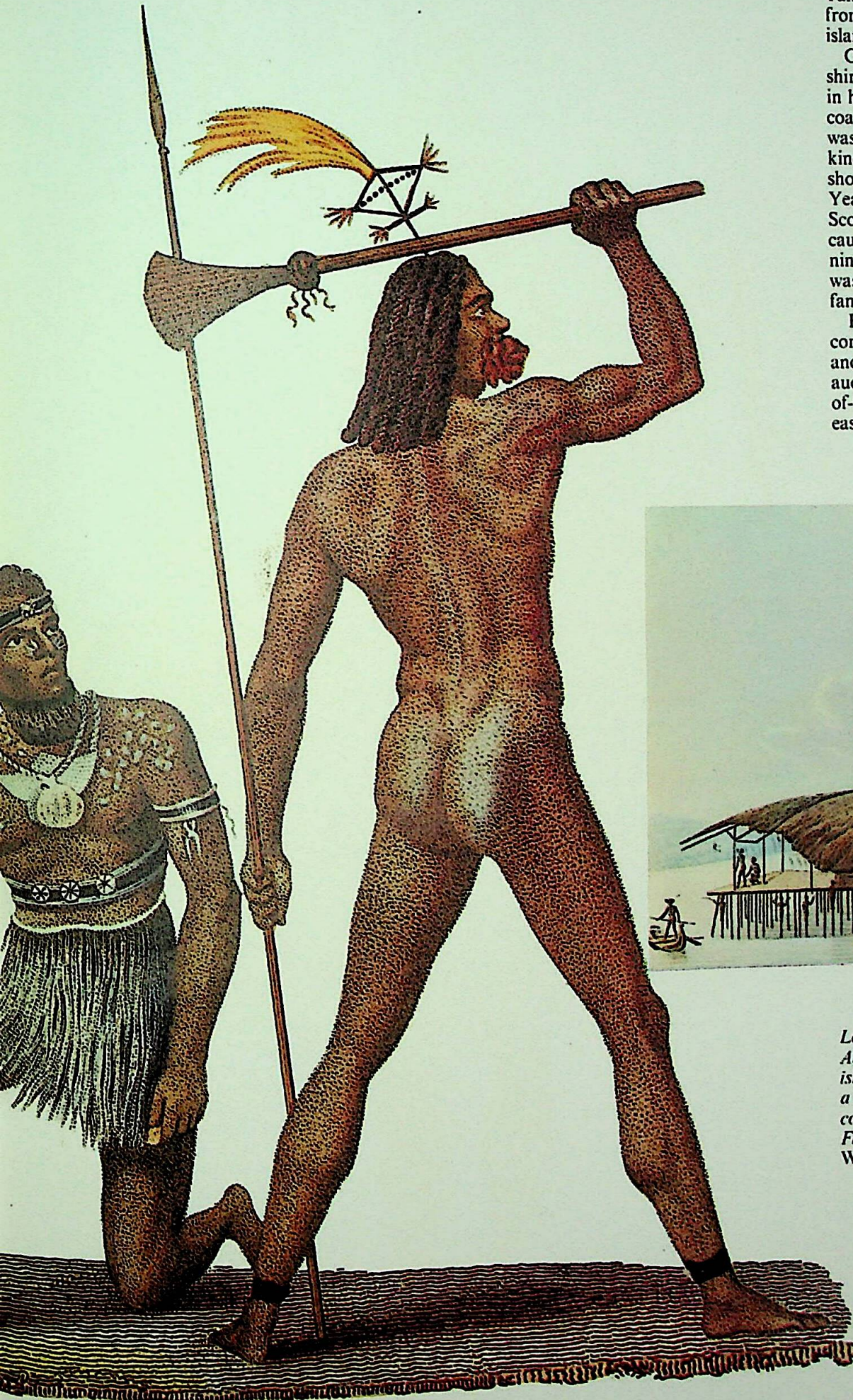




command of Bougainville also visited Tahiti: but it was Cook's three great voyages from 1768 that literally put the Pacific islands on the map.

Cook (1728–78) was the son of a Yorkshire farmworker. He had run away to sea in his teens, worked on colliers on the east coast, and then joined the service. His record was distinguished, and of the most valuable kind for his future activities—charting the shoals of the St Lawrence during the Seven Years War and surveying the coasts of Nova Scotia: but his rise was slow, perhaps because of his humble birth. He was thirty-nine, and newly made a lieutenant, when he was given the command that made him famous.

He had all the requisite qualities. He was completely professional, popular, brave and audacious—though his courage and audacity were expressed in such a matter-of-fact executive thoroughness that they are easily overlooked. Like other eighteenth-



*Left: Melanesian natives of New Ireland. Above: pile houses. In the north of the island, ancestor-worship is still practised by a secret society, part of whose ceremonial consists in the wearing of elaborate masks. From Duperrey's Voyage around the World. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)*





century commanders, he kept order among his men—the disreputable haul of the press-gangs—by harsh discipline; but his scrubbing-brush-and-vegetables regime almost banished the seaman's worst enemy, scurvy.

### **Ships, instruments and scientists**

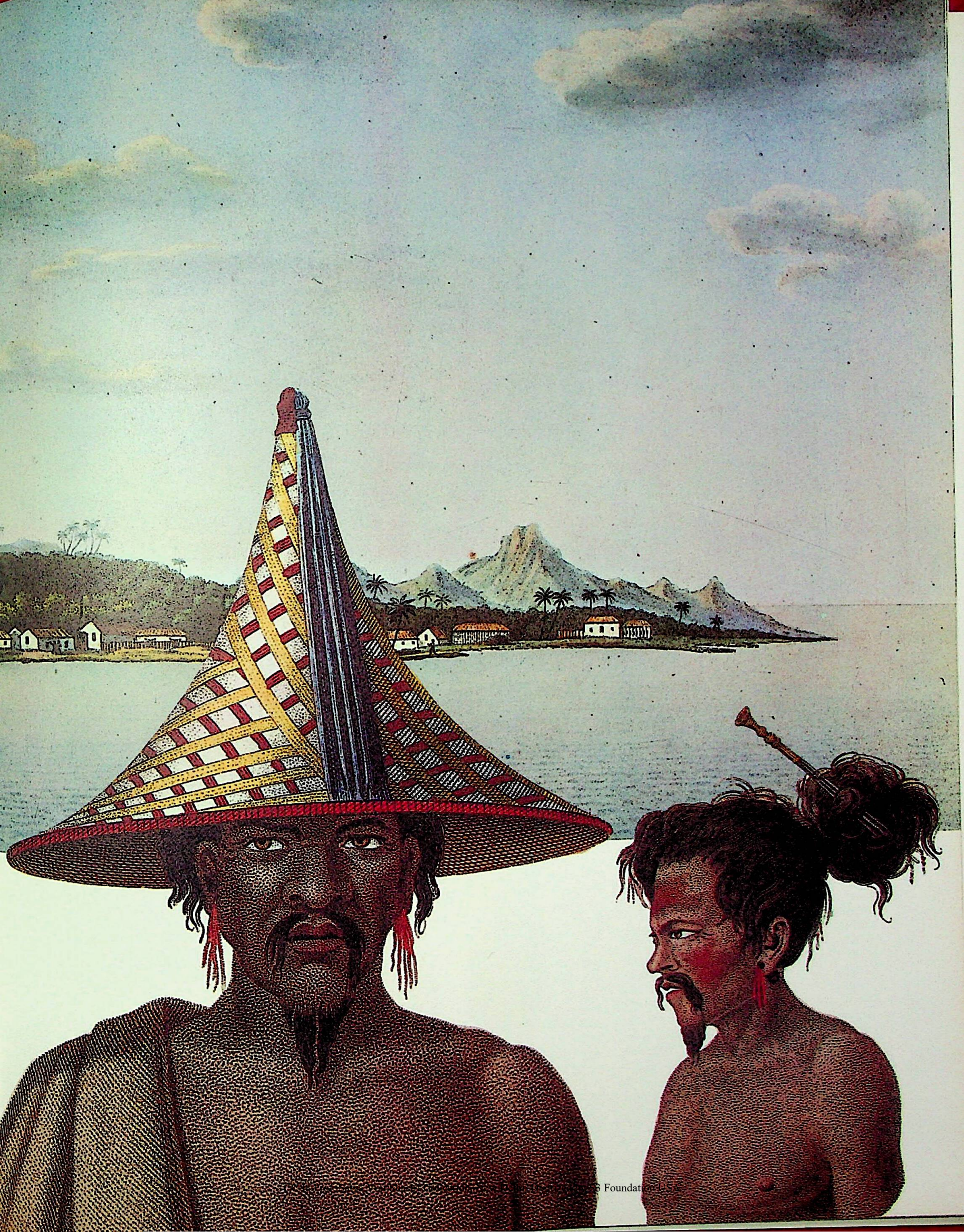
The public (and genuine) objective of Cook's first voyage (1768–71) was to observe from a mid-Pacific station the transit of Venus across the face of the sun—in itself an important task, undertaken at the instance of the Royal Society. But when Cook left England in August 1768 it was with secret and quite explicit instructions to search for the unknown southern continent, to bring

back specimens of Pacific flora and fauna, to cultivate the friendship of any natives he met, and to take possession, in the king's name, of such territories as he discovered.

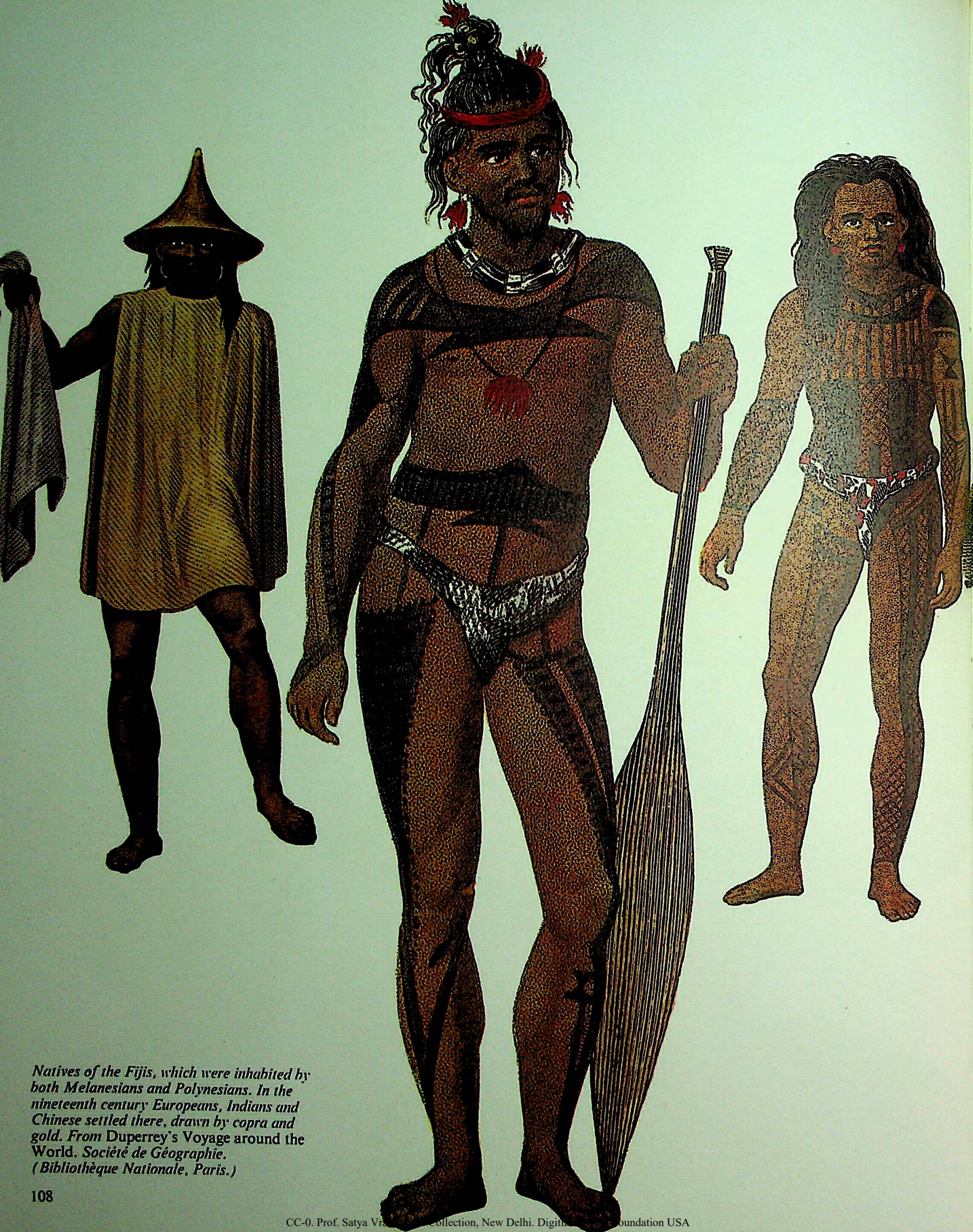
Cook's ship, the *Endeavour*, was an adapted collier: a slow but sturdy vessel whose shallow draught made her ideal for surveying in coastal waters. With him Cook had the most up-to-date navigational aids: the sextant, which made it possible to take astronomical readings despite the ship's motion, and accurate lunar tables with which to interpret the readings. On his second voyage Cook was to secure even better results by taking an improved chronometer that measured distances at sea. Thus it had at last become possible to navigate and chart the Pacific accurately.

*Above: The volcanic island of Bora-Bora, in the Society Islands. The islands were visited by Wallis, Bougainville and Cook; a French protectorate was established in 1843. Natives of the island of Waigeo, in the Raja Ampat group off New Guinea (right). From Duperrey's Voyage around the World. Société de Géographie. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)*









*Natives of the Fijis, which were inhabited by both Melanesians and Polynesians. In the nineteenth century Europeans, Indians and Chinese settled there, drawn by copra and gold. From Duperrey's Voyage around the World. Société de Géographie. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)*





The *Endeavour* also carried the naturalist Joseph Banks, an astronomer and an artist; and Cook's later expeditions were similarly accompanied. His were therefore the first scientific expeditions activated by an unprejudiced curiosity, which extended to the human fauna, towards whose customs Cook and the scientists displayed a sympathy and tolerance worthy of the Age of Reason.

### First voyage: the south Pacific

The *Endeavour* reached Tahiti via Cape Horn in April 1769, and stayed for three months—the first protracted contact between Europeans and Polynesians. The easy conditions of Polynesian life—and the absence of Western sexual taboos, of which the sailors took full advantage—made the island seem a paradise. The accounts given by Cook and others on their return lent credence to the myth of 'the noble savage'. In Tahiti itself, one of the effects of European contact soon appeared: half of Cook's men contracted the venereal diseases presumably brought by Bougainville's or Wallis's sailors. Nevertheless, apart from the Tahitian propensity to steal anything they could lay their hands on, relations between Europeans and natives were excellent.

After observing the transit of Venus—an activity almost prevented by the theft of the quadrant—Cook followed his secret instruc-

tions, sailing south and then west to New Zealand. He spent six months methodically charting the 2,400 miles of the coastline. The warlike Maoris, who had scared off Tasman, were handled with tact and remained friendly. By establishing that New Zealand consisted of two islands, Cook further diminished the possible extent of the legendary southern continent.

From New Zealand he sailed to Australia, making landfall at what was christened Botany Bay, in a part of the island continent that was far more inviting than the barren shores hitherto known: Cook called it New South Wales. Within a few years it was to be the home of English convicts and their keepers. The expedition explored the 2,000 miles of the eastern coastline, narrowly escaping disaster on the Great Barrier Reef, and observed the seemingly primeval landscape of Australia—the 'blackfellows' who seemed like the first men, the hopping kangaroo and flying fox (opossum). The final achievement of the voyage was a passage through the Torres Strait, virtually rediscovered after 160 years, which confirmed that Australia was a separate island from New Guinea. The *Endeavour* now returned via the Cape to England (1771), having circumnavigated the world.

The explorers' reception was a compound of scientific and literary enthusiasm. They had revealed the existence of an innocent

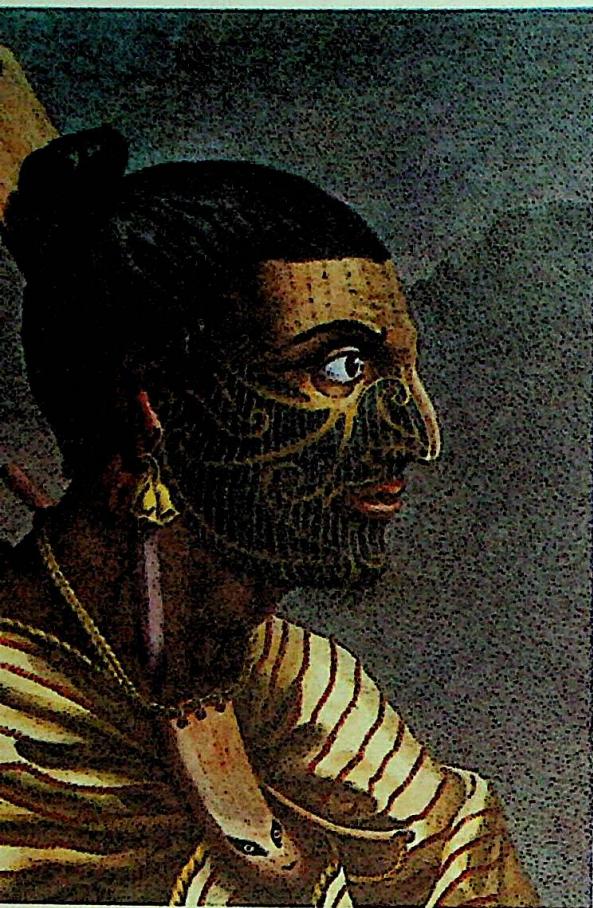
world which had never known the Fall, mapped it, and brought back a vast quantity of botanical, zoological and geological specimens and drawings, as well as native tools and clothing. The papers on which the naturalists Banks and Solander dried their specimens were, ironically, proof sheets for a commentary on Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

### Second voyage: Terra Australis vanishes

Cook did not stay long to enjoy his fame. In July 1772 he set out on his second voyage with the *Resolution* and the *Adventure*, both adapted colliers like the *Endeavour*. This time he followed Tasman's example and entered the Pacific from the west, determined to hold a course as far south as possible. And during the three summers (1772-4) of this second voyage, the *Resolution* ventured into the South Polar Sea, three times crossing the Antarctic Circle and once reaching as far south as latitude 71 degrees. By the end of the third summer it had effectively circumnavigated the Antarctic.

The fabulously wealthy southern continent had once and for all been proved a myth: below the southern oceans there were only walls of ice, numbing cold, gales and fogs. Cook thought that there probably was a land-mass centred on the South Pole: but the question of its existence seemed of little

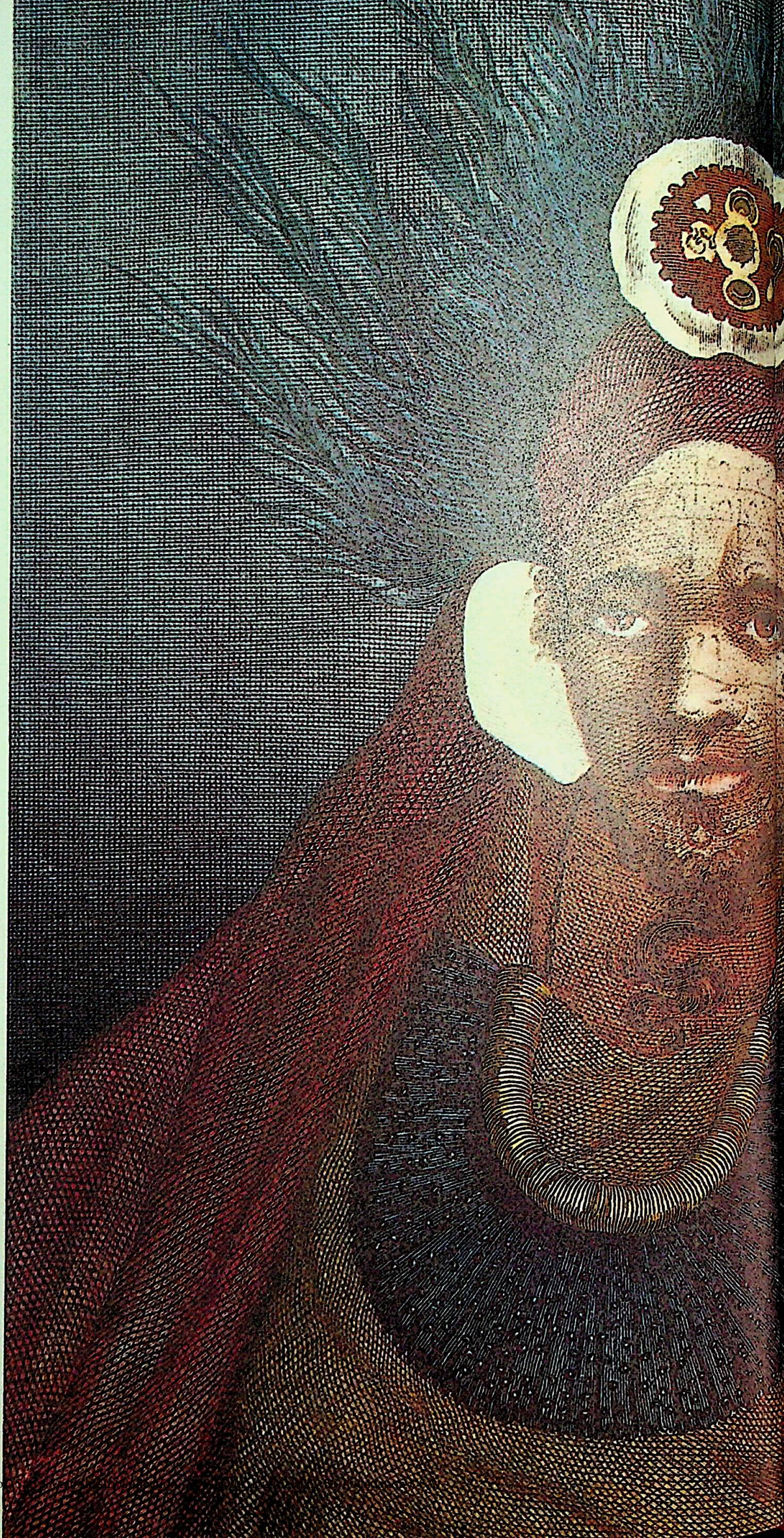




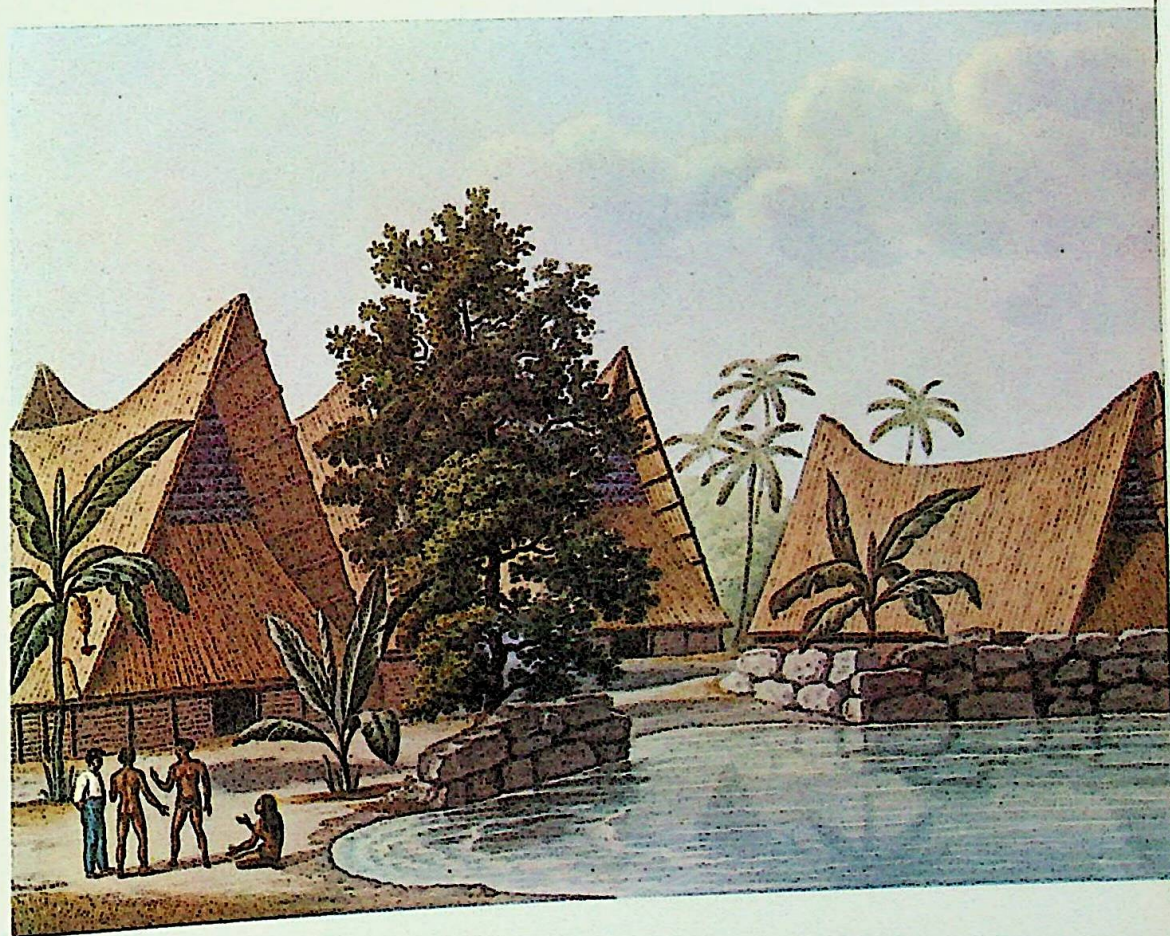
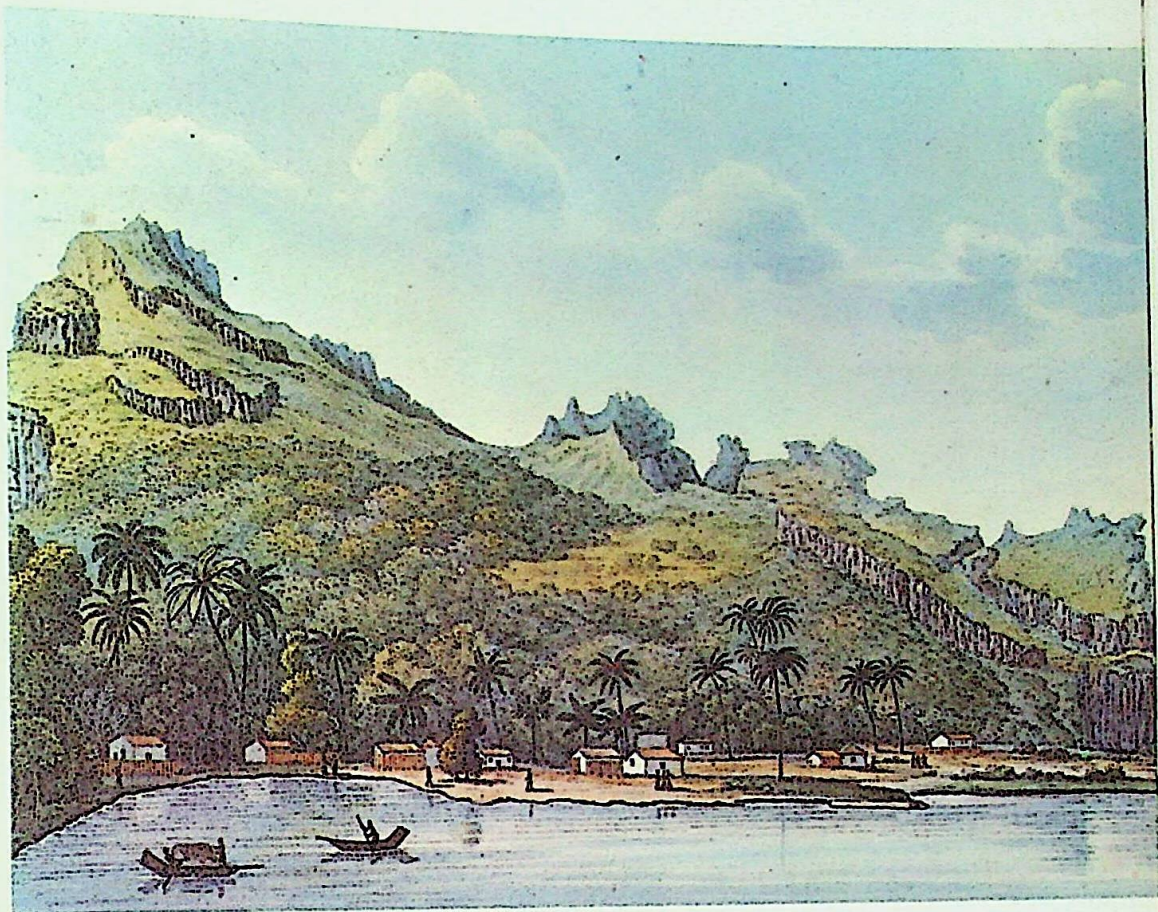
*Tattooing was practised by the Polynesians, and Cook's sailors brought the art (and the word itself, which is Polynesian) back from Tahiti. The Maoris of New Zealand decorated themselves with particularly lavish curvilinear tattoos, as above. From A Journal of a Voyage to the South Seas, by Sidney Parkinson, London, 1784.*

*Centre: a chief of the island of St Christine. From Cook's Voyage towards the South Pole and around the World, London, 1777. (British Museum.)*

*Far right, above and below: village on the island of Oualan, in the Carolines. From Duperrey's Voyage around the World. Société de Géographie. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)*









interest and incapable of solution. The hazards encountered by the *Resolution* understandably led Cook to believe that no explorer could penetrate further. He wrote,

'the Southern Hemisphere has been sufficiently explored, and a final end put to the searching after a Southern Continent, which has at times engrossed the attention of some of the maritime powers for near two centuries past, and the geographers of all ages'.

The wealth hoped for in Terra Australis Incognita did exist, though not in the form envisaged by readers of Marco Polo and Quiros. Cook's exploration of Tierra del Fuego, South Georgia and the Sandwich Islands revealed that the polar regions supported an abundance of wild life, including whales, seals and sea-lions. The existence of such prey was to bring large numbers of Europeans into the South Pacific within a few years of Cook's voyages.

Cook and his men recuperated from the rigours of Antarctica by spending the winters roaming the Pacific, discovering or rediscovering the Marquesas, the Society Islands, the New Hebrides, New Caledonia, Norfolk Island, and many other islands. Perhaps the most fascinating rediscovery was Easter Island, on which great crumbling figures gazed mysteriously into the distance. The expedition's artist, Hodges, painted a picture which effectively conveys their remote, unreal presence. The exploration of the Oceanic islands alone would have justified Cook's second voyage: the circumnavigation of the Antarctic made it an epic. His return to England in 1775, again loaded with drawings and specimens, sealed his fame.

### Third voyage: the North-West Passage

Again he scarcely paused to enjoy it—which indicates that, for all his matter-of-factness, Cook suffered from the compulsive wanderlust attributed to the explorer in folklore. In

1776 he sailed to lay another myth: the North-West Passage. Two centuries before Cook, Englishmen had tried to find a north-west passage from Hudson's Bay into the Pacific; now he was to seek it from the Pacific. There was also a political motive for the voyage: Cook was instructed to discover how much of the Pacific coast of North America was in Spanish and Russian hands.

On this, his last voyage, Cook sailed into every sizeable inlet along the Alaskan coast without finding the North-West Passage, passed through the Bering Strait across the Arctic Circle, and explored the Arctic coast of America, discovering and naming Cape North. Further south, he discovered Christmas Island (1777) and the Hawaiian Islands (1778); and it was to Kealakekua Bay in the Hawaiian Islands that he returned from the Arctic (1779) and met his death.

As in the previous year, he was welcomed as a god. His ships, the *Resolution* and the *Discovery*, left Kealakekua Bay for home, but were forced to turn back by two days of storm. The homage due to a god was repeated, despite the tiresome impropriety of the god's reappearance; but trouble blew up when some Hawaiians stole one of *Discovery's* boats. Cook had faced this situation before, and made his standard response by taking hostages to compel the return of the boat. But this time something went wrong: Cook's men fired at some canoes and killed a chief. The Hawaiians attacked Cook's party on the shore. The explorer was stabbed in the back and fell face down in the water, and the incensed Hawaiians surrounded his body and cut it to pieces. A friendly native later brought some of his remains out to the ships, and they were buried at sea.

### Pacific cultures

Cook and his men, like other Europeans, found it difficult to distinguish between the various peoples they encountered: 'Indians' were either happy, like the Tahitians, or miserable, like the natives of Tierra del

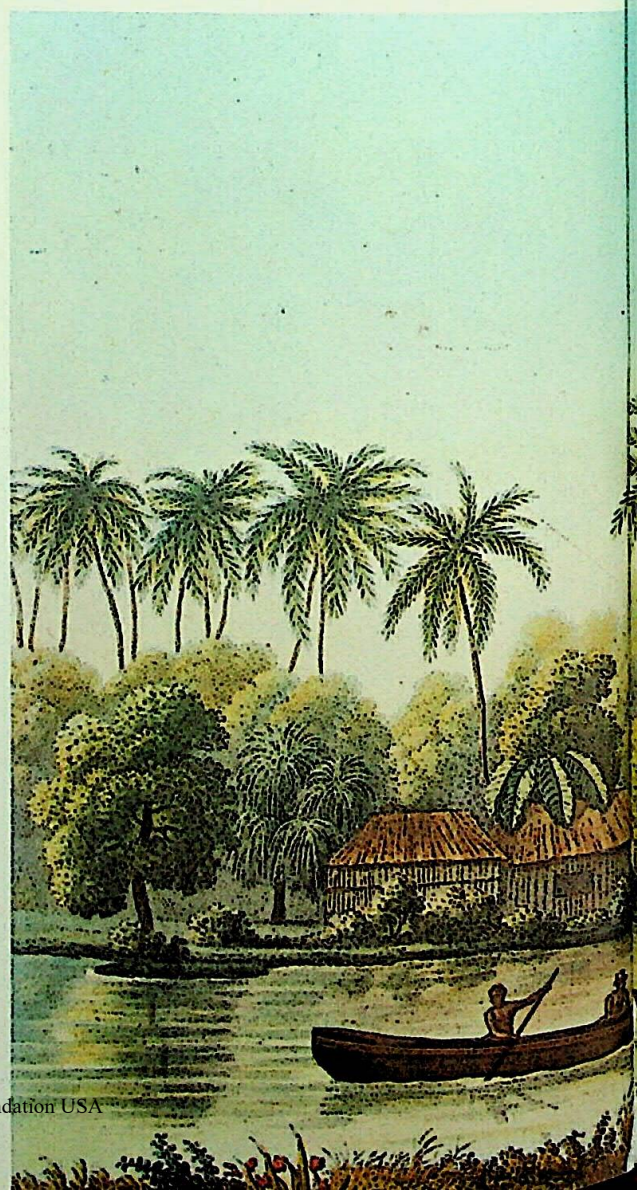
*The many peoples of the Pacific.*

*Above left: Europeans rowing among the pile houses of Waigeo, off New Guinea.*

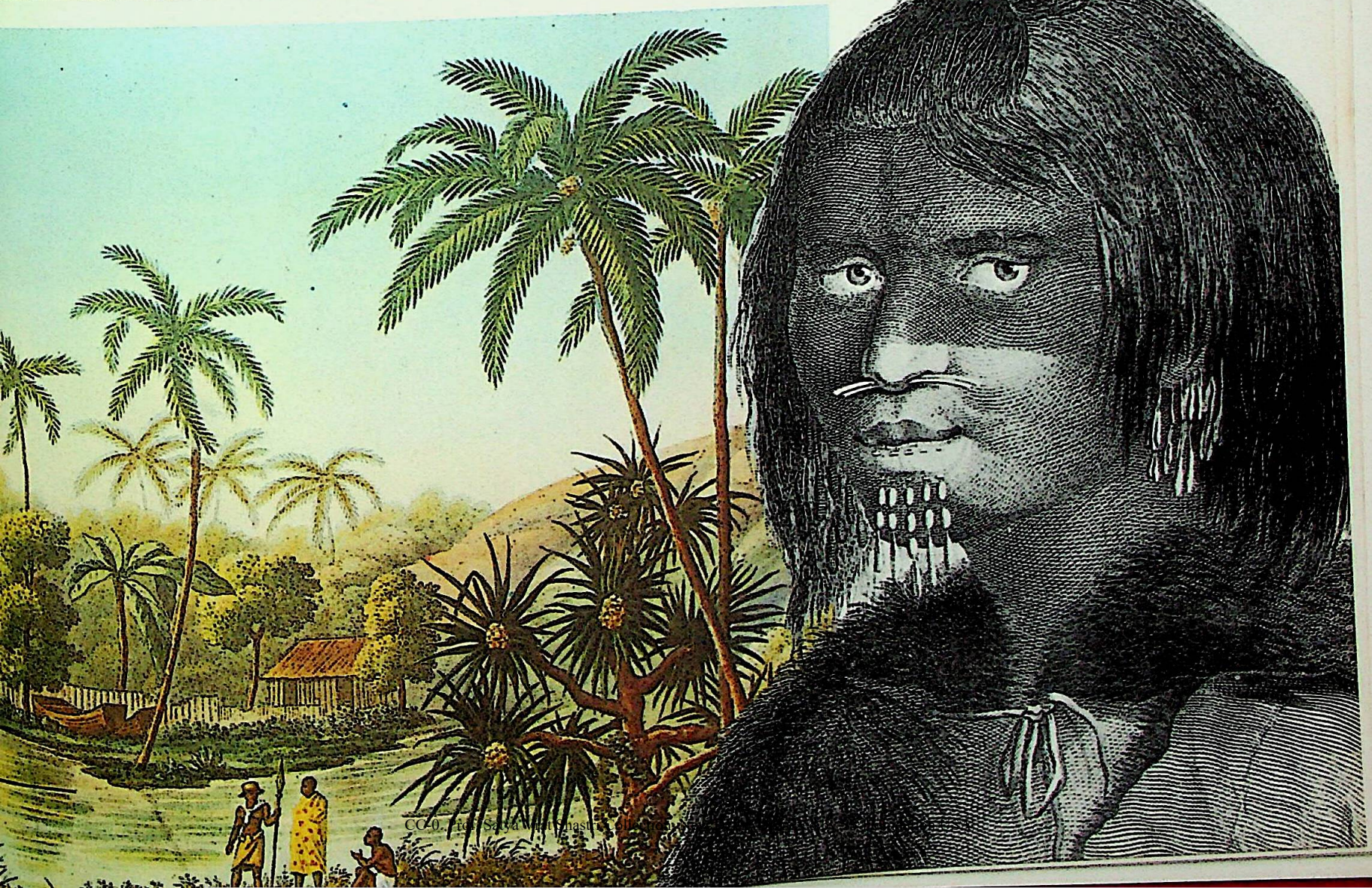
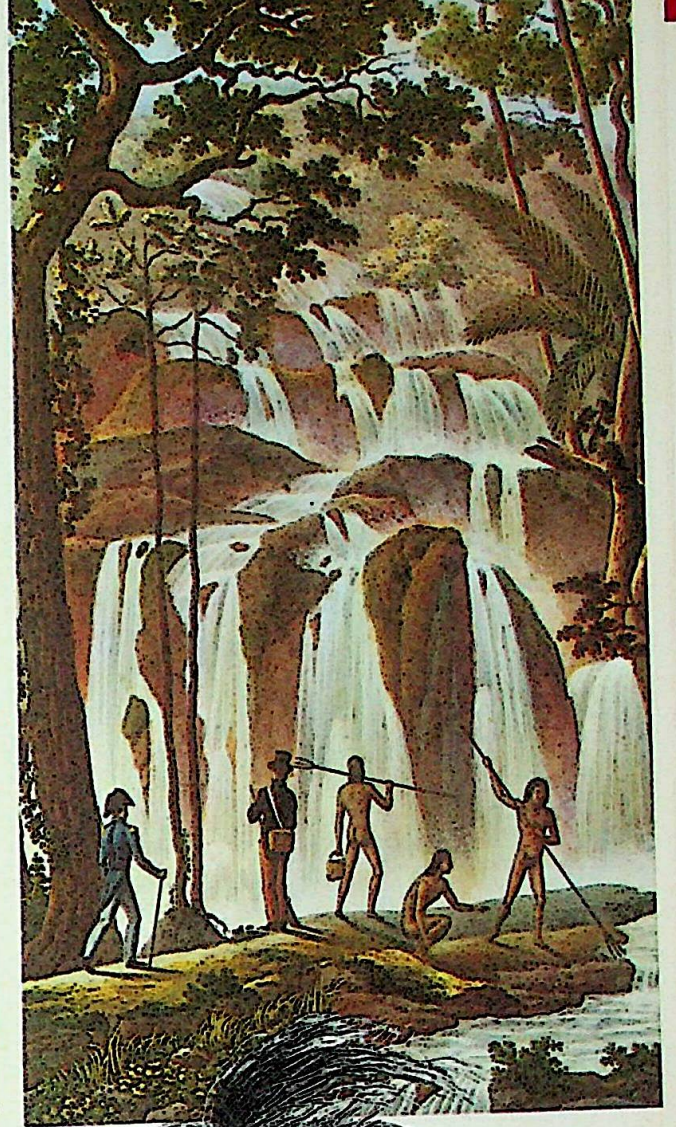
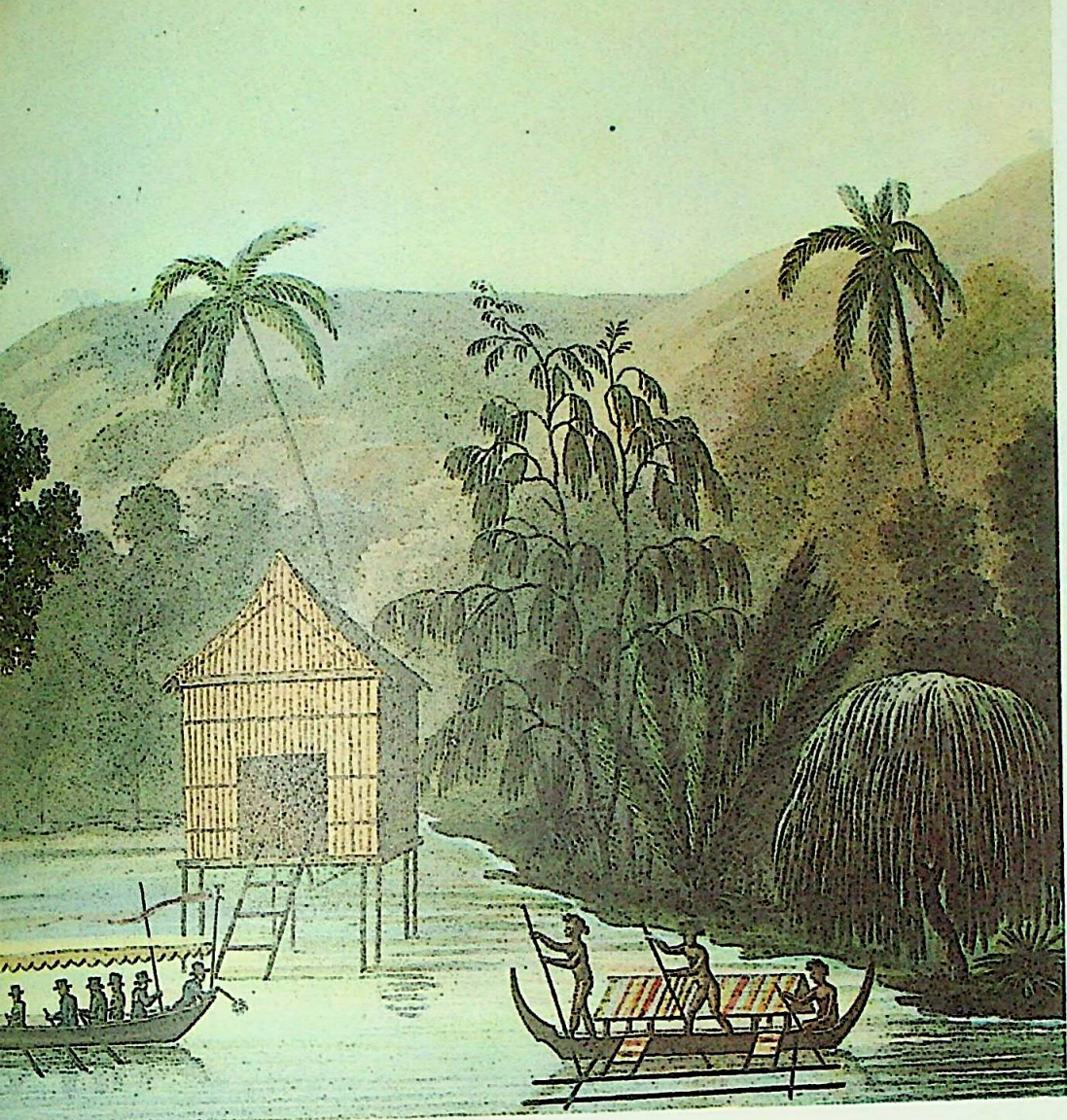
*Above right: waterfalls at Praslin, New Zealand.*

*Opposite: a view of Matavae, on Tahiti, where Cook made landfall on his first voyage. From Duperrey's Voyage around the World.*

*Far right: Indian girl from Prince William Sound, Alaska. Cook found her perforated ears and nose, and her slit lip, 'most unsightly'. Engraving by J. Webber, from A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean, London, 1784. (Three volumes: Vols I and II by Captain Cook; Vol. I, ' by Captain James King.)*









Fuego, whom Cook described as 'perhaps as miserable a set of people as are this day on earth'. In the course of his three voyages, Cook became aware that Oceania contained a diversity of races and cultures; and the realisation that the Tahitians took part in savage intertribal wars, practised infanticide and indulged in occasional human sacrifices disabused him of any idea that Pacific peoples were 'innocent'.

In fact, Pacific societies were the product of a long evolution, and even the least advanced had made a complex adaptation to their surroundings. They had elaborately regulated codes of social behaviour, extensive mythologies, and highly developed skills. Among other things they produced striking drawings, paintings and objects for magic and ritual purposes. They were, however, inferior to Europeans in certain essential respects: they did not use metal, they had not developed a system of writing, and they had no draught animals. They also took for granted many rites that were repulsive to the European moral sensibility; though it may be questioned whether the self-mutilation of the Aborigine or the cannibalism of the islanders was crueller than what actually went on in European slave ships and prisons.

## Tasmanians and Australians

The Tasmanians and Australian Aborigines were the most backward peoples in the Pacific: they were hunters and food-gatherers, like men of the Paleolithic (Old Stone Age) period. The Tasmanians, now extinct—or rather extinguished by the white man in the nineteenth century—were a dark-skinned, woolly-haired people, possibly of Papuan origin. Where they came from and how they reached Tasmania is unknown. As tool-makers they lagged behind the Aborigines, since they had neither spears nor boomerangs. They probably numbered only 5,000.

Australia, too, was sparsely populated, with only a few hundred thousand Aboriginal inhabitants, who had come to Australia from Asia before the two land-masses had separated. Australia lacked cereals and herding animals, which limited the possible development of the Aborigine. But though his existence was a hand-to-mouth one, his few skills—making weapons, hunting, fishing, gathering berries and grubs—were developed to an extraordinary degree, and ensured survival even in periods of drought. A complex kinship system linked the various clans within a tribe, and every tribe had its totem—a common ancestor, plant or animal—which was celebrated in ceremonies. All Aborigines practised some form of initiation of the young at puberty (usually circumcision) which entailed the infliction of great pain. Aboriginal painting and drawing—on bark, on the ground, in caves—ranged from extreme stylisation to a vivid naturalism.



## Melanesia, Micronesia, Polynesia

The peoples of Oceania were at the Neolithic (New Stone Age) level of development; that is, they lived in permanent settlements, cultivated the land and had domesticated animals. All subsisted on 'garden' and tree products such as yams, coconuts and bread-fruit.

But the differences between them were as important as their similarities. Oceania was inhabited by three distinct races, though there was inevitably a good deal of cross-breeding and cultural interchange. The Melanesians ('black islanders') were the least advanced, dark-skinned, woolly-haired peoples who had spread from New Guinea

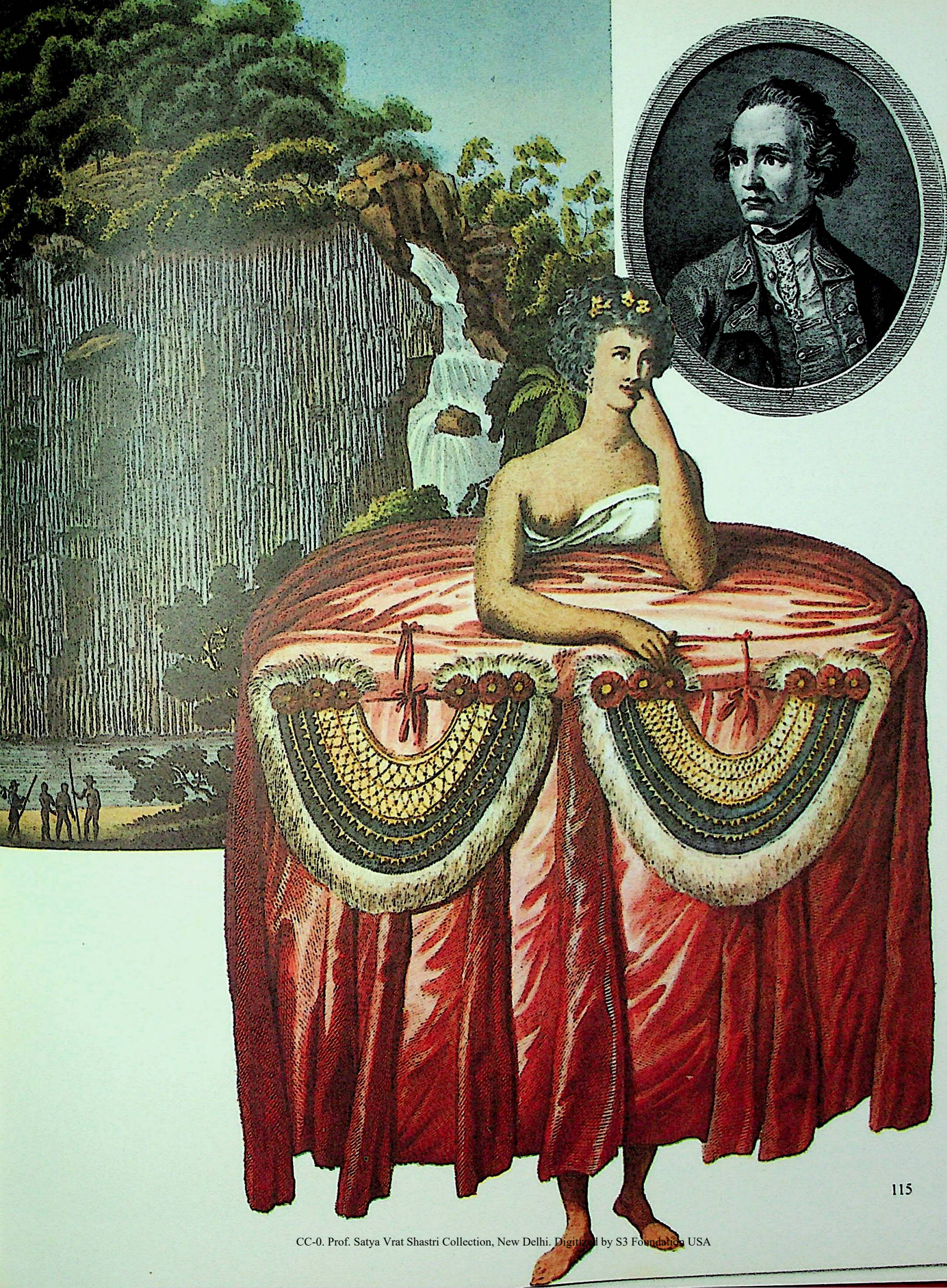
*Tahiti was discovered by Wallis in 1767, and the French commander Bougainville visited the island in the following year. Their accounts, and those of Cook, who made an extended stay in 1769, gave Tahiti a reputation which it has never lost.*

*Above: this view of the rocks near Matavai indicates the striking natural beauty of the island. From Duperrey's Voyage around the World.*

*Right: Tahitian girl in 'European' dress: another of the attractions. From A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean, London, 1784, by Cook and King.*

*Above right: Captain Cook. Engraving from his Voyage towards the South Pole and around the World. (British Museum, London.)*







to the neighbouring islands (the Solomons, the New Hebrides, New Caledonia, part of the Fijis). The dense vegetation in most parts of Melanesia led to the development of isolated, widely different communities with separate languages.

The Micronesians ('people of the small islands') were predominantly Mongoloid, relatives of the peoples of eastern Asia. They had yellow-brown skins and straight black hair, and were small and slight. Both racially and culturally they were more hybrid than the other Oceanic peoples, Polynesian influence being particularly strong. They occupied the Marianas, the Carolines, the Marshalls and the Gilbert Islands.

The Polynesians ('people of the many islands') were the latest arrivals in the Pacific. Where they came from remains in dispute: most scholars believe it was Asia, but Thor Heyerdahl has put forward a strong argument in favour of South America, proving by his famous Kon-Tiki expedition (1947) that it was possible to make a journey by raft from Peru to the Society Islands. Whatever their origin, the Polynesians were undoubtedly a remarkable sea-faring people. According to the orthodox account, between the ninth and thirteenth centuries A.D. they spread out from the Society Islands over a vast area of the Pacific, reaching the Hawaiian Islands, the Ellice Islands, New Zealand and Easter Island.

They were a Caucasian people, with good physiques, light-brown skins and straight or wavy hair, and occupied the most favoured areas of the Pacific (free from malaria, supporting the sweet potato, etc.). These facts largely account for the European prejudice which even now leads people to identify 'Polynesians' and 'South Sea Islanders'. However, it is true that they were most advanced of the Pacific races. Apart from their sea-faring exploits (less in evidence by the eighteenth century), they made a sophisticated study of oratory, were skilled musicians, and possessed an appealingly dignified code of manners. On his second voyage, Cook brought a Tahitian called Omai back to England, where he became a society lion with no difficulty at all, meeting George III and sitting for two romanticised portraits by Sir Joshua Reynolds. The less attractive side of Polynesian life included diseases (yaws, hookworm), cannibalism, and a variety of murderous burial and sacrificial rites.

Easter Island deserves to be mentioned separately, since it has been the subject of much speculation. It is a thousand miles from the nearest Polynesian island (Pitcairn) and two thousand from South America; so that, whichever direction they came from, the Polynesians must have accomplished a great feat of navigation in reaching it. The island has two features of intense interest: the gigantic statues carved from soft volcanic rock, which in the eighteenth century were still crowned with hats carved from a

different red stone; and wooden tablets carrying undeciphered writing or hieroglyphs—the only example in the whole of the Pacific. Both are now attributed to the Polynesians rather than a 'lost' race, but the almost complete destruction of the island's population in the nineteenth century terminated any oral tradition that might have provided more information on the subject.

## The European invasion

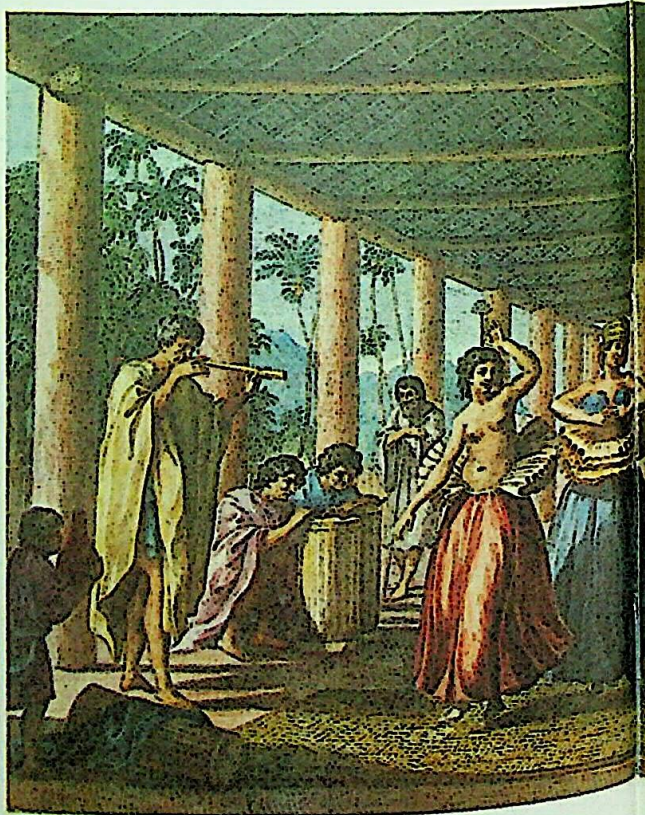
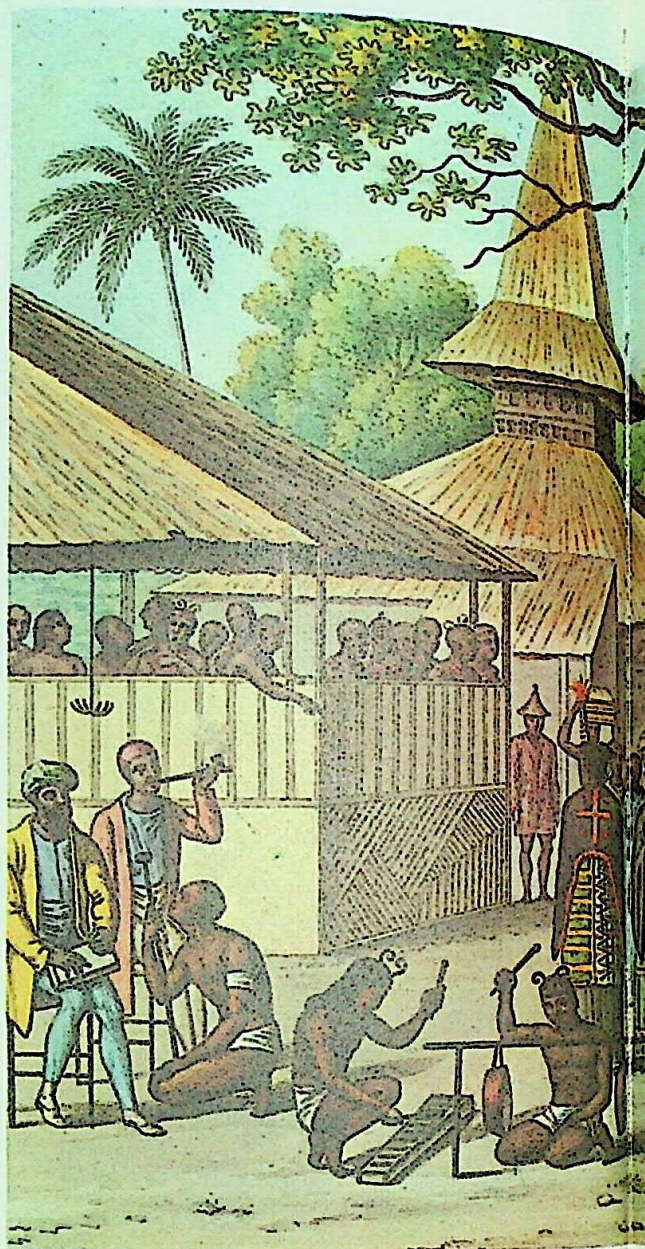
Australia had few inhabitants, whereas the Pacific islands were densely populated, perhaps even overpopulated. Europeans were soon to reverse this situation by colonising Australia and visiting a whole series of misfortunes on the islanders.

The explorers behaved well, exemplifying rational curiosity and a humanitarian enthusiasm which extended to providing friendly natives with seed, iron tools and domestic animals—the introduction of the pig greatly improved the islanders' diet. Cook set a high standard of conduct that was generally followed by his successors, of whom the best-known are the French commanders La Pérouse (1785–8), Freycinet (1818–19) and D'Urville (1826–9 and 1837–40).

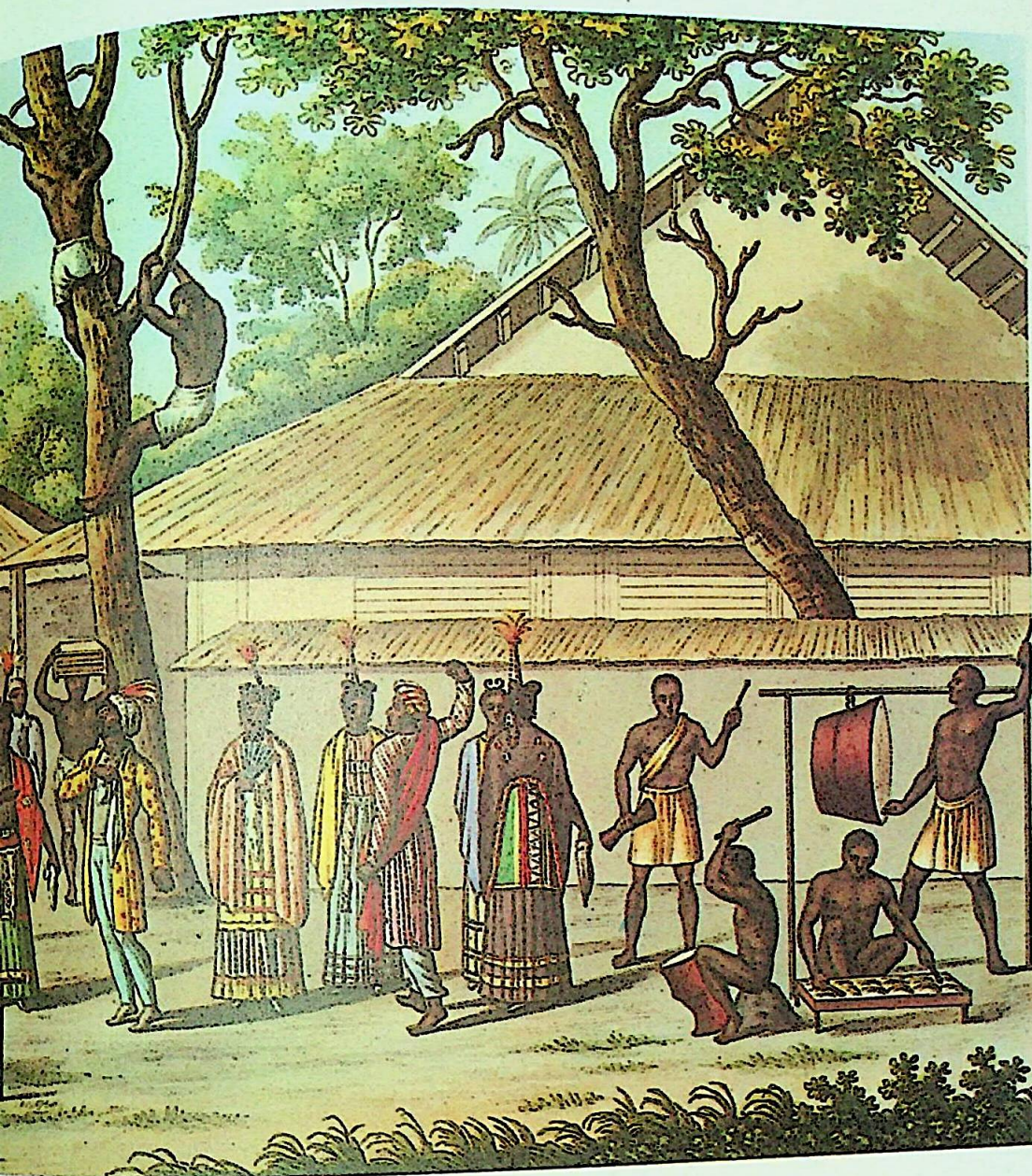
All the same, the explorers were indirectly to blame for the coming disaster: they made the Pacific accessible to the European. Cook himself repeatedly expressed doubts as to the benefits of European influence on the natives, though he mainly thought in terms of a fall from grace on their part. Up to a point he was right: the islanders quickly became dependent on European tools and began to lose some of their old skills; and European firearms made tribal wars much more deadly.

The civilised attitudes of the eighteenth-century gentleman-officer-scientist were not shared by sailors and most other Europeans. The famous mutiny on the *Bounty* (1789) provided a clear warning: the mutineers, who have become heroes of romance for setting the tyrannical Captain Bligh adrift in an open boat, mistreated the natives and fought among themselves wherever they went (Tahiti, Tubai, Pitcairn).

The depredations of the European were to be on a much larger scale than this. The Pacific became the stamping ground of the escaped criminal, the deserter and the ne'er-do-well. Traders invaded the area, greedy for sandalwood, copra, pearls, and *bêche-de-mer* (an edible sea-slug very acceptable to the Chinese palate). 'Blackbirders' kidnapped or hoodwinked thousands of islanders to work in the sugar-cane fields of Queensland and the mines of Mexico and Peru. Whalers and sealers disrupted native society with alcohol, violence and disease, as well as destroying the wild life of the Antarctic. Missionaries resisted these intrusions but suppressed the island cultures, forbade singing and dancing, and (regardless





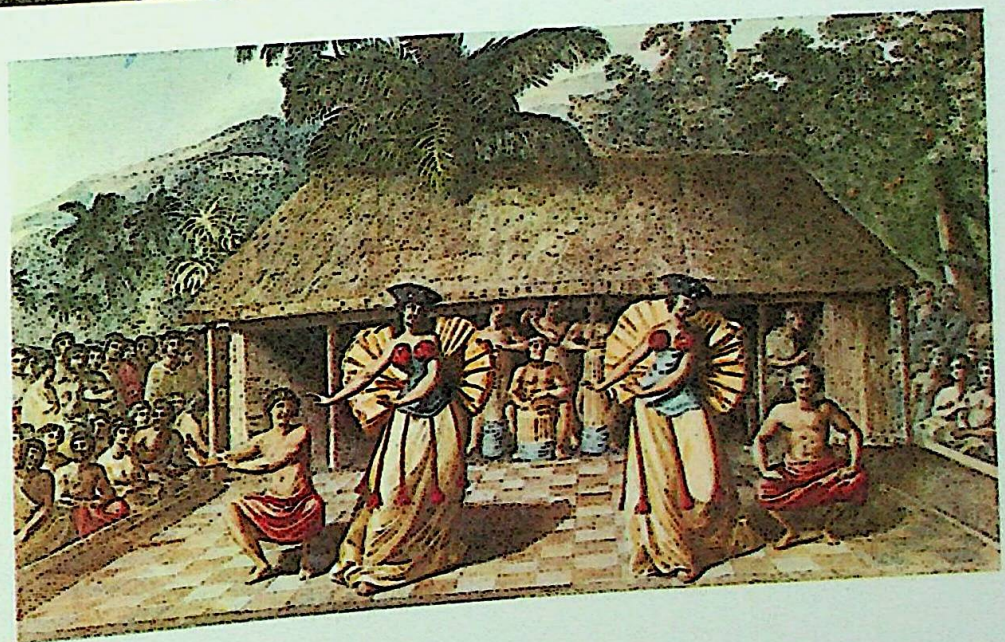
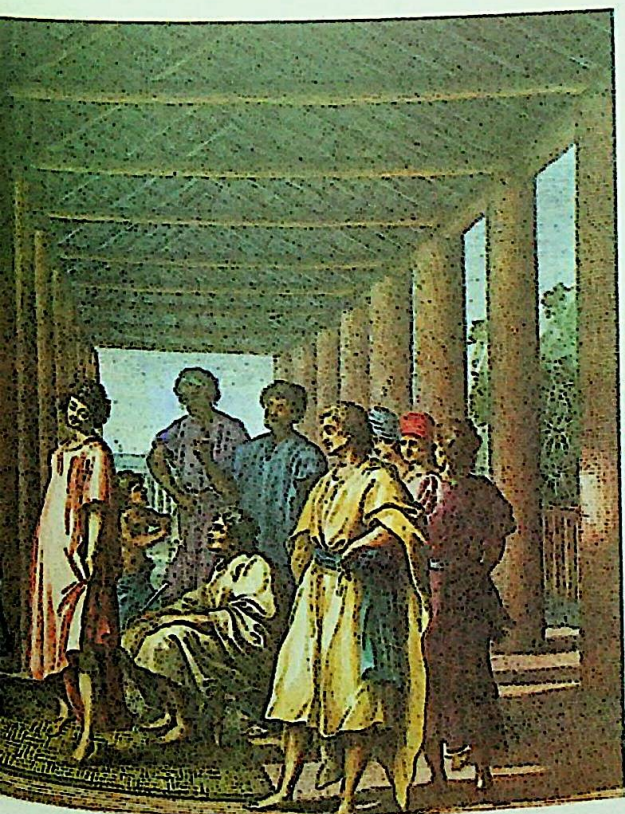


*The explorers of Oceania took with them artists as well as scientists, with the result that we have a pictorial record of the Pacific cultures just before their disruption by the European.*

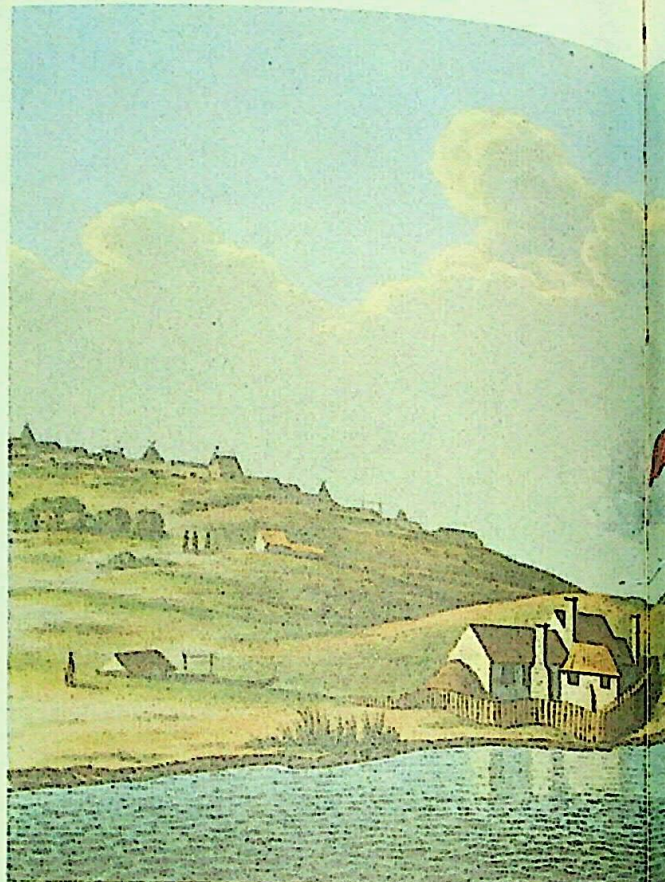
*Left: a religious ceremony at Caieli, on the island of Bouran. From Duperrey's Voyage around the World.*

*Below left: a dance on the island of Ulietea. From Hawkesworth's account of Cook's voyages.*

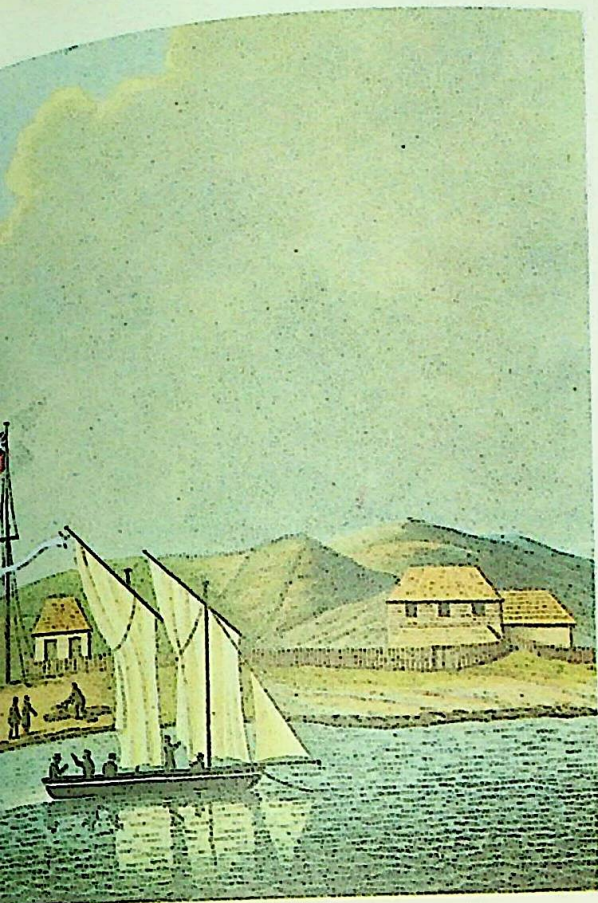
*Below: Tahitian women dancing, by J. Webber. From Voyage to the Pacific Ocean, London, 1784, by Cook and King.*











of climate) thrust the men of the islands into singlets and shorts, and the women into 'Mother Hubbard' shifts. If the demoralised natives escaped kidnappers, press-gangs, alcoholism and venereal disease, they succumbed to European ailments—influenza, smallpox, tuberculosis—against which they had built up no immunities.

Most of these developments were in full swing by the end of the eighteenth century. The most striking result was a catastrophic decline in population, visible by the mid-nineteenth century, when the European powers began to annex the island groups. Generally speaking, annexation improved the native's lot by giving him some sort of legal protection; but the damage had already been done. The booming trade in copra brought Chinese, Indian, Japanese and other immigrants into the Pacific in the nineteenth century. But the islanders themselves made a partial demographic recovery only in the present century, and the cultural adjustment is still not complete.

The fierce Maoris of New Zealand, in origin a Polynesian race, were slightly more fortunate. They were given to fighting among themselves and eating each other, but proved capable of resisting the white man with remarkable success. The arrival of European traders enabled them to acquire firearms, which increased inter-tribal bloodshed but also put them on an equal footing with the European. When annexation inevitably took place (1840), the Maori race was still intact and able to secure relatively favourable terms.

### The birth of white Australia

European governments were slow in annexing and settling the Pacific lands, partly from preoccupation with European events, partly from a growing conviction that political control was unnecessary and burdensome. The single exception, Australia, was made only because Britain had lost her American colonies, and with them a dumping-ground for convicts. In 1788 eleven ships under Captain Arthur Phillip arrived at Port Jackson (later Sydney), just above Botany Bay, with a cargo of 717 male and female convicts and a New South Wales Corps raised in Britain to guard them. The eastern half of Australia was formally claimed by Great Britain.

Guarded chain-gangs of convicts continued to work in the new continent as before: the rigours of the British penal system were simply transferred unchanged to a new setting, except that uncertain supplies, rum and the unreliability of the New South Wales Corps made for greater confusion and hardship. For two decades Australia was governed despotically by naval commanders, who spent much of their time trying to suppress the traffic in rum and curtail the power of the officers of the Corps, who had become great landed proprietors. The Aborigines were driven from their hunting-grounds and be-

came pitiful hangers-on or retired further inland, where they killed and were killed by any white man they came across. The settlement of Tasmania began the process by which the white man rapidly destroyed the native population. There was an insurrection of Irish convicts (mainly political prisoners from the Irish rebellion of 1798) in 1804, and a 'rum rebellion' in 1808 against one of the governors, the unlucky Bligh of the *Bounty*. It was in many respects an unpromising beginning.

More constructive efforts were also being made. The first free settlers arrived in 1793, provided by the British government with tools and grants of land. The convicts too were given land when their sentences expired. Sheep-raising began in the seventeenth-nineties. In 1798 George Bass discovered the strait separating Tasmania from the continent, and in 1802-3 Matthew Flinders completed the exploration of the south coast and circumnavigated Australia. The continent had become a British preserve, and it was only a matter of time before it was annexed (1829).

The nineteenth century was to be one of continued hardship, dissension and exploitation (convicts were transported to Australia until 1867), but also one of settlement, exploration and eventual self-government. For better or worse, a new nation came into being in the South Pacific.

### Latin America

Latin America was much larger in the eighteenth century than it is today. Below the English and French settlements on the east coast of North America, almost the entire continent belonged to Spain and Portugal, who excluded all colonists but their own nationals. The only exceptions on the mainland were French Guiana

#### *Europeans and the Pacific.*

*Above left: Indians of Tierra del Fuego: a romanticised view of the natives Captain Cook called 'the most miserablest people on earth'. From Hawkesworth's account of Cook's voyages.*

*Above right: English missionaries at Kerikeri, New Zealand. From Duperrey's Voyage around the World.*

*Left: party from Cook's ships hunting 'sea-horses' (i.e. walrus) off Alaska. Engraving from a drawing by J. Webber. From A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean, 1784, by Cook and King.*

*Far left: native of the island of Tanna. From Hawkesworth's account of Cook's voyages.*



(Cayenne), Dutch Guiana (Surinam), and the British logwood-cutting camps in Honduras, which the Spanish made intermittent attempts to evict. The Caribbean, a vital area because of its sugar, indigo and tobacco, was divided between France, Britain and Spain. It was one of the main theatres of colonial warfare.

The Portuguese share of Latin America was Brazil: all the rest belonged to Spain. And the area of Spanish sovereignty was still growing. Texas was permanently occupied (1720–222); Spanish colonists settled Upper California from 1769, founding San Diego, Monterey, San Francisco and Los Angeles; Spanish explorers penetrated further up the west coast in an effort to pre-empt the British and Russians. Spain acquired Louisiana (the territory east of the Mississippi) from her ally France as compensation for Florida, which was ceded to Britain in 1763 but regained in 1783. Thus, over the century, Spain even made a territorial profit from her dealings with her stronger rivals.

The keynote of the century in both Spanish and Portuguese America was expansion, in most senses of the word. Spanish settlers moved into Uruguay in the seventeen-twenties, founding Montevideo, and into Patagonia in the seventeen-seventies. The Portuguese expanded to the south and west of Brazil. Cities, above all Mexico City, grew in size and splendour: trade boomed; new sources of wealth were tapped; and wealthy colonials began to visit the Old World.

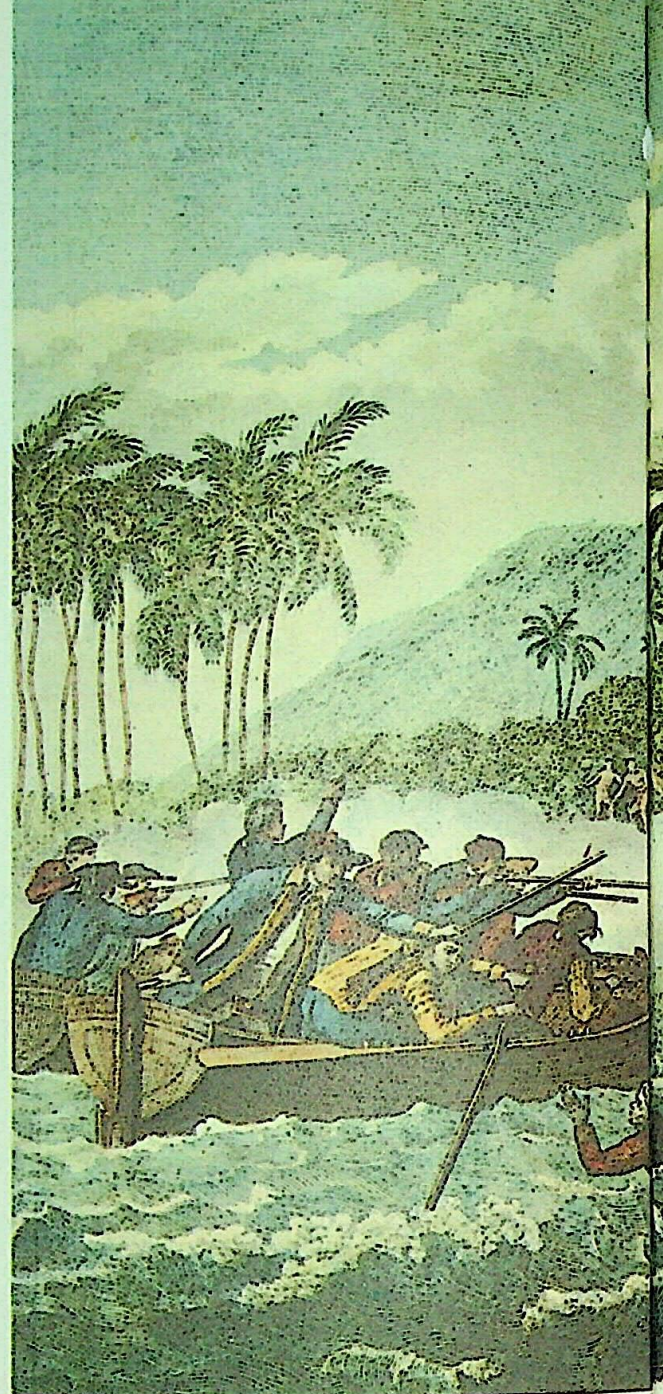
Much of this was made possible by reforms in Spain and Portugal: but their success in fact brought forward the date when the colonies would seize their independence. Mercantilist economics encouraged all states to exploit and restrict the development of their colonies. The fact that Latin America was ruled by states poor in resources and militarily weak made the growth of colonial self-confidence a dangerous phenomenon.

## Spanish America and the Bourbons

The consequences of Spain's seventeenth-century decline were severely felt in Spanish America. By 1700 the Spanish colonial system was riddled with administrative and economic flaws. The administration was highly centralised; but as the central authority was 4,000 miles away in Madrid—and incompetent at that—any decision of importance took months or years to make. Almost every office was for sale to the highest bidder. Since the main Spanish-American authorities were remote viceregal courts, decisions were effectively made by corrupt local officials.

Trade was restricted to a degree unusual even in the protection-conscious eighteenth century. Colonies could not trade with other countries or even with each other: essentially all trade took place between Seville and Cadiz in Spain and Vera Cruz (Mexico) and Porto Bello (Panama). Goods from Spain bound for Buenos Aires, for example, had to be carried via Porto Bello, 3,000 miles to the north—and carried as part of a convoy that left Spain at infrequent and irregular intervals. The only exception to the Spanish monopoly was the Asiento concession, which allowed British merchants to supply the Spanish colonies with slaves and send an annual shipload of merchandise to Porto Bello. It was mainly important as a cause of numerous Anglo-Spanish disputes, culminating in the war of 1739–48. However, the result of Spanish exclusiveness was not a monopoly but an extensive contraband trade carried on from the West Indies.

As in Spain, the early Bourbons introduced piecemeal reforms—rationalising the administration, suspending the convoy system, breaching the monopoly of Seville and Cadiz—that were applied more widely and rigorously under Charles III. Charles created rational administrative areas that in fact became the boundaries of the later South American nations; gave extensive authority



*Right: a Hawaiian native about to stab Captain Cook. The artist, John Webber, accompanied Cook on his third voyage and actually witnessed the scuffle that led to Cook's death.*

*Bottom: nocturnal dance performed before officers of Cook's expedition by the men of Hapae. From the posthumously published Voyage to the Pacific Ocean, 1784, by Cook and King.*







to officials, modelled on the French *intendants*, who provided a link between the provincial administration and local functionaries; and allowed the chief Spanish and Spanish American cities to trade freely with one another. The sale of offices was progressively eliminated over the century, though it was not abolished until 1812.

The benefits of this policy quickly became apparent. The Spanish-American economy (Mexican silver, Cuban sugar, Venezuelan cacao, Argentinian hides) advanced rapidly, and the volume of trade between Spain and the colonies multiplied by 700 per cent between 1778 and 1788. Increased revenue enabled the government to reduce customs duties and provide the colonies for the first time with regular forces to defend them. Royal control over the Church was strengthened and the Jesuits were expelled (1767).

The Jesuits were outstanding in the Americas as educators, explorers and benefactors of the Indians. Particularly important were the mission towns ('reductions') they set up in Paraguay and the surrounding

area. In these the Indians were organised semi-communally and protected from the depredations of slave-traders; for them, the expulsion of the Jesuits was a disaster.

### Colonial discontents in Spanish America

Most of the benefits of Charles's reforms were garnered by the dominant class—the Creoles—American-born Spaniards who formed a landed and mercantile aristocracy. They comprised about a fifth of the sixteen million Spanish Americans, jealously guarded their near-monopoly of wealth, influence and education; and looked down upon the *mestizos* of mixed blood as well as the Indians. It was they who studied at the modernised universities of Lima and Mexico, formed the main readership of the newspapers and periodicals that began to appear at the end of the century, and controlled such municipal institutions (comunes) as survived under Habsburg and Bourbon rule.

Yet even under Charles III it remained Spanish policy that almost all officers of the crown should be Spanish-born. The result was that the creoles' class-consciousness began to be a national consciousness too: by the seventeen-eighties they habitually referred to themselves as 'Americans'. To exclude a wealthy and influential class from political responsibility was to create a potentially revolutionary situation; and even in the prosperous seventeen-eighties there were ominous symptoms of restlessness: an Indian revolt in Peru (1780–2) and a Creole-led rising in Colombia (1781).

It was no accident that they occurred during a wartime recession: the security of Bourbon rule depended upon continued prosperity—at best a prosperity limited by the Spanish monopoly of the colonists' external trade. The incompetence of Charles III's successor, and above all Spanish involvement in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, led to a collapse of political and economic control from which Spanish rule in America never recovered.





Left: exposure of a corpse. There is a priest on the left of the picture. From Hawkesworth's account of Cook's voyages. Right: the waterfalls of Fanafaona, New Zealand.

Below: women of the island of Oualan, in the Carolines, from Duperrey's Voyage around the World. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)

## Brazil

Like Spanish America, Brazil expanded in the eighteenth century, though to a more limited extent. It remained essentially a coastal plantation society, producing cotton, sugar and—beginning in the eighteenth century—coffee. However, the discovery of gold and diamonds in the south-west brought a flood of immigrants to Brazil, pushed the line of Portuguese settlement into the Matto Grosso, and brought a factitious prosperity to Portugal itself.

The advance into the agricultural lands of the south was more solidly based. Portuguese settlers reached the River Plate, and a dispute began with Spain over the possession of Uruguay. An agreement reached in 1750 was short-lived, but had one important consequence: Uruguay was consigned to Spain in return for eastern Paraguay, which involved the transfer of seven Jesuit reductions to Portugal. Encouraged by the Jesuits, the Indians resisted their new masters (1752–6), thus exacerbating Pombal's hostility towards the Jesuit order, whose expulsion from the dominions of Portugal (1759) marked the beginning of their decline. Only after two colonial skirmishes was agreement reached (1777) as to the Spanish-Portuguese frontiers. Spain kept Paraguay and Uruguay; Portugal's claims to the vast Amazon basin were recognised. The new boundary was substantially that of modern Brazil.

The only serious reforms of the Portuguese colonial system—always laxer than that of the Spaniards—were Pombal's work. Areas that had been administered as semi-private property were brought under the control of the crown, and Brazil became a single unified colony. The Lisbon-Oporto monopoly of trade with Brazil was ended, albeit by the creation of two more monopolistic companies. Administrative careers were thrown open to American-born Portuguese. Indian slavery was abolished (though without much practical effect). More regular troops were sent to Brazil, and the militia

system was extended as part of Pombal's forward policy in Uruguay.

Many of Pombal's measures were reversed on his fall; others never became effective. Colonial manufactures were still restricted: colonial trade was still compelled to operate via Portugal; Portuguese Americans still lacked the authority and opportunities appropriate to their wealth. Easy-going government from Portugal, and cultural backwardness and lack of urban centres, inhibited the spread of an 'American' sentiment, but there was an abortive attempt at revolution in the great mining area in the south-west (1789).

The stimulus that led to independence came from outside. The Portuguese regent, John, fled from Napoleon's armies to Brazil (1808), initiating the sequence of events which culminated in Brazilian independence under John's son, Pedro (1822). Here too, the French Revolution and its Napoleonic sequel changed the destinies of men. They are the subject of volumes fourteen and fifteen in this series.











Above: the title page of *The life of Fr. Joao de Almeida of the Jesuit Society in the Province of Brazil*. The Jesuits were outstanding in Latin America as educators and benefactors of the Indians. Their benevolent attitude towards their prospective

converts and their business acumen brought about conflicts with Orthodox Catholics and with the Catholic rulers of the eighteenth century. Charles III, wishing to bring about the subjugation of Church to state, expelled the Jesuits from Spain and her dominions in

1767. They had already been banished from Portuguese and French territories, and by 1773 the pope was forced to dissolve the order. (Radio Times Hulton Picture Library, London.)



## EUROPEANS IN THE PACIFIC

The Pacific	Europe
<b>1500</b>	
Balboa sights Pacific (1513)	
Magellan crosses Pacific (1520)	Luther's 95 theses (1517)
Mendana: first voyage (1567)	
Sir Francis Drake in Pacific (1578)	
Mendana: second voyage (1595)	
<b>1600</b>	
Janszoon: 'New Holland' (1605)	Gunpowder plot (1605)
Voyages of Quiros and Torres (1605)	
Hartog explores western Australia (1616)	
Tasman's voyage (1642-4)	English Civil War (1642-6)
Dampier on north coast of Australia (1699)	
<b>1700</b>	
Roggeveen discovers Easter Island and Samoa (1721)	
Wallis and Carteret (1766-7)	Seven Years War (1756-63)
Bougainville (1767-9)	
Cook: first voyage (1768-71)	
Cook: second voyage (1772-5)	American War of Independence (1775-83)
Cook: third voyage (1776-9)	
Voyage of La Pérouse (1785-8)	
Australia: convicts at Botany Bay (1788)	
Bounty mutineers on Pitcairn (1790)	Storming of the Bastille (1789)
Australia: first free settlers (1793)	
First mission on Tahiti (1798)	
<b>1800</b>	
Voyage of Freycinet (1818-19)	Battle of Waterloo (1815)
D'Urville: first voyage (1826-9)	
Australia annexed (1829)	
D'Urville: second voyage (1837-40)	Great Reform Bill (1832)
New Zealand annexed (1840)	Victoria becomes queen (1837)
French begin island annexations	



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## Acknowledgments

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